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CRITICAL SKETCHES

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BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE papers on Rousseau, Tolstoi and Verestchagin, Westminster Abbey, and Dickens and Daudet have appeared before, and my acknowledgments are due to the proprietors of *Macmillan* and the *Cornhill* respectively, for leave to republish.

The last in the series has been adapted from a lecture.

A. E. S.

CONTENTS.

CRITICAL SKETCHES.

ROUSSEAU'S THEORY OF EDUCATION.

If Rousseau had no other merit, he had at least that of consistency. From first to last his text is one and the same; the views put forward in the first discourse, amplified and modified as they were in succeeding publications, are still at bottom the views of "The Social Contract" and of "Émile." It is true that their emotional author has passed from the primitive state of Nature—the object of his earliest affections—that state which, casting facts from him, as he says, he embroidered on the simple material which he found ready to his hand; it is true that he has passed from this, first of all to a slightly more advanced stage, in which the social instincts had some room for play, and from that again to the recognition of the fact that Society, on certain lines and under certain restrictions, holds out opportunities to man which counterbalance the lost virtues of his early independence; but the later view is more

apparently than really a contradiction of the earlier one. Rousseau has been actually travelling along the same road from the beginning to the end of his journey, and the author of "Émile" even now looks back at times with something like longing to that pleasant country through which the writer of the second discourse took his way.

His watchword is liberty, or independence, or, one may almost say, selfishness. The principle which at starting has fascinated him is that of equilibrium, of mental and moral stagnation, of absolute indifference to all but self, of a pleasure which consists in the simple unhindered drawing of the breath, a torpidity like that of a surfeited boa-constrictor.

Why was man made perfectible, when beast was not? Rousseau asks in effect. Why did Nature give him the fatal power to mould himself irrespective of her intentions, when she denied it to the world of animals? When man had no needs, he was content; when he had no virtues, he had no vices; when he had no thought for the next hour, he had no cares; when love was unknown to him, he had no passions; he needed no companion, because he had nothing to communicate; he had as little dependence on his fellow-man as any of the wild creatures, among

which he lived, on others of their kind. This was Rousseau's earliest ideal, a solitary, apparently lower in the scale than the ant or the bee, differing from them only in the large possibilities of improvement which were his, and, for that very reason, to be sincerely commiserated. How these potentialities should have gone on smouldering for ages without a flame to show their existence, Rousseau does not explain. Let us, however, take his word for it, that man did maintain the equilibrium, and that the second discourse gives an account of it, as true as it is particular. The smoke, however, has now become flame; the balance is weighed down, and the fatal movement begun which is to turn a pure animal into a social and reasonable being. Rousseau will not call this progress, but he admits that, up to a certain point at any rate, the change which was taking place was a salutary one. There was a period, and perhaps a long one, when the savage tasted the sweets of society without its bitters, because the intercourse of man and man had its foundation in fellow-feeling, and not in expediency; when his simple industries were still within the compass of his own individual powers; when he had exchanged the bare ground and the shelter of the forest for a rude hut, had learnt to dig out his rough canoe, to stitch together his covering of

skins, and knew somewhat of family life. Here, if he had been wise, he would have stopped, but his dawning intelligence carried him on. Nature or chance taught him to see that the fruitful earth might be made to provide him with food, discovered to him the quality and use of metals, and put the implements of agriculture into his unaccustomed hand. This was the turning point. Metallurgy and agriculture gave the momentum which poetry has attributed to gold and silver. With broad distinctions between the employment of one man and another came barter and mutual dependence. Man's reality and his appearance were no longer necessarily identical; his singleness was merged in duplicity, and, for the future, he appeared, not as what he was, but as what it was his interest to appear. The descent to Avernus has begun; simplicity and innocence take to themselves the wings of the morning; ruse and deceit sweep down like harpies in their place. Taught by them, the rich man, the fortunate possessor of flocks and herds, persuades his poorer brother that so happy a state of things ought to be perpetuated, arms him in defence of a society which is unequal before everything, and sets him to guard a temple of liberty which shelters the merest caricature of the divinity. The influence of the family and the patriarchal system are as nothing to Rousseau as affecting

the origin of society; but all this it is beyond my purpose to criticize. It remains, however, to see for what species of state the young citizen is to be prepared, and what results his education is to achieve.

The type which is constantly held up for our admiration is that of Sparta, a state from which artists and men of science were driven unceremoniously, a people of action, trained in a hardy and austere school, a race of "Ironsides" of distinctive characteristics and few external relations. This approaches very near to Rousseau's ideal of perfection. He cries aloud for liberty, but what he sketches for us is only equality, or, at least, liberty in strict accordance with his lights. Our grandmother the state, had Rousseau modelled it for us, would decline to let us give way to the empty curiosity which is called physical science, or to the avarice which is called geometry, or even to the study of eloquence, which is only the child of ambition and deceit, or to astronomy, which is rooted in superstition. All these several pursuits are the offspring of vice, and nothing but vice, and their results are as uniformly hostile to innocence and virtue; the individual, as the unit in the sovereign people, would have the pleasure of docking his own freedom of action as the simple citizen, and cribbing and confining himself with sumptuary laws in a spirit of ultra-Puritanical one-sidedness. Rousseau, in fact, as we shall see in

"Émile," is wholly non-moral wherever we meet him. The citizen of his dreams is a very near approximation to the savage; he has no spontaneity, because everything is mapped out for him; he is free, but only as the man is who is shadowed by a detective; he has no vices, because the opportunity for vice is put beyond his reach; still less has he any virtues. The letter to d'Alembert on stage-plays is only one more monument of the same failing. Rousseau believed very rightly that the theatre ought not to be credited with the faculty of making virtue desirable and vice odious; even where it scourges infamy, it none the less familiarizes us with it.[1] All this he illustrates in an admirable way, but it is pure folly to attempt to wrap a township up in cotton wool as he would have done. Mr. Morley goes so far as to say, "If the citizen (of Geneva) really was what Rousseau insisted that he was, then his virtues would surely neutralize the evils of the drama; if not, the drama would do him no harm." This, however, is rather like saying, "I may as well leave my money lying about. If my servant is proof against temptation, he will not take it; if he is already potentially a thief, he will be no worse for being one actually," and "lead us not into temptation" becomes a

[1] Diderot, however, in the "Paradoxe," speaks of actors as "hommes d'une utilité réelle, fléaux du ridicule et du vice prédicateurs les plus éloquents," &c.

perfectly futile aspiration. Genuine good principles are not always incorruptible, and the drama would certainly have been prejudicial under some aspects to the ideal community which Rousseau paints under the name of Geneva; but the very fact of its toleration or admission would have proved that the picture was over-coloured, and it was for the Genevese to speak out for themselves, and prove their right to the character which their panegyrist gave them in doing so. The picture of the simple pleasures of the Genevese is a charming one, with all the unreality of, let us say, the household in "Paul and Virginia" on a large scale, but there is a pendant to it which is probably true to life and expresses exactly the kind of existence which was very near Rousseau's heart, or at least appealed very nearly to the tissue of sentiment which stood with him in the place of a deeper-seated preference. He tells us how, when he was a young man, he passed through a little community of watchmakers on the mountain-side above the lake of Neuchâtel. The village was almost self-supporting; the wants of the villagers were simple, and they supplied them themselves; each watchmaker manufactured all the tools necessary for his trade; each house stood in its own piece of ground; the pleasures of society were tempered with the possibility of retirement. During the winter, when the snow lay deep, the people were

often house-bound for weeks at a time. It was then that they were able to turn to account the skill and the accomplishments which were the common characteristic of all. The graceful and ingenious products of a winter's day penetrated even to Paris. All of them could draw; many of them played the flute. Each little circle was indeed a microcosm. The self-contained man, the self-contained household, the self-contained community—even when Rousseau is sounding the praises and asserting the claims of society at large, still what he returns to with the greatest zest is the quietude of the man who lives for himself, the policy of non-intervention, so to speak, the weak point of which, its selfishness, was not calculated to strike one who was an egotist first and a humanitarian afterwards.

Rousseau has never been a name to conjure with on this side of the Channel. We have accepted him, generally speaking, as a man whose genius was in too real a sense the issue of a diseased condition of mind and body for anything sane and wholesome to come out of him, and even the England of his own day,[1] to whose

[1] Dr. Johnson probably expressed the sentiments of a large number of his fellow-countrymen when he said, "Rousseau, sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years."

philosophical writings he was, for the rest, much indebted, never knew that subjection to the mesmeric quality of his doctrines which was so marked a feature in the history of the succeeding generation on the Continent.

To parents and guardians his name has long been anathema; supersensitive, heterodox, lax in morals, the enemy of society—in the restricted sense of the word—the sport of a mawkish sentimentalism, to them his name, whatever vision it may call up, certainly does not spell education. This, however, we know, or ought to know—Carlyle has vouched for as much—that Rousseau, in his own way, which doubtless might have been bettered, did strive to pierce through the unreal crust of conventionality to the veritable heart and truth of things which lies underneath. For him, as for Carlyle's other heroes in their degree, Nature, as he conceived it, was his consistent aim; for this he worked; this he did his best to depict.

"Émile" bristles with defects which are so patent that the critic might almost pass them by if they were less fundamental; as a matter of fact, they form the basis of the whole superstructure. There is, however, a virtue in the book, and that is the solid one which belongs to the work of a man of clear head, of full courage, and a rare power in the

manipulation of language. The result is a homogeneous and comprehensive whole, in which each least significant detail has been treated with a thoroughness which makes the book a perfect encyclopædia for the doubtful inquirer.

So thoughtful a contribution to the science of child-education—a qualification which is necessary because we shall find that the further we advance with our author the less practical do his suggestions become—deserves at least our respectful recognition. Starting from the very ushering into the world of his subject matter, Rousseau does not quit him till he is safely married to a wife as well equipped educationally for her part as he for his, nor is he content to deal in generalities and avoid difficulties, but on the contrary lays down rules which leave something to be desired on the score of flexibility, and divides up the matter with which education is concerned with a preciseness which argues some want of sense of the intimate way in which one subject is bound up with another. More important still, he confronts the religious question with boldness, and, in "The Savoyard Vicar's Profession of Faith," expounds the emotional Deism which was the natural outcome of his fervid temperament.

It is difficult to forget that the man who begins his book with an appeal to mothers as sensible as

it was well-timed, and displays a positively minute thoughtfulness for helpless infant humanity, had in his own person flouted the maxims which he was presently to lay down. Let us, however, put to the credit side of his account the constant reference to the subject in the "Confessions," which show how hardly the denial of the obligations of fatherhood weighed on his conscience in later years. Nor does it do to forget that the man was made up of contradictions, that the aspirations of one day were forgotten the next, the vows revoked, the convictions undermined, and all in perfect sincerity. Diderot hardly exaggerated when, speaking of fanatics, he said: "Tel est Jean Jacques Rousseau, lorsqu'il se déchaine contre les lettres qu'il a cultivées toute sa vie; la philosophie qu'il professa; la société de nos villes corrompues, au milieu desquelles il brûle d'habiter, et ou il serait désespéré d'être ignoré, méconnu, oublié. Il a beau fermer la fenêtre de son ermitage qui regarde la capitale, c'est le seul endroit du monde qu'il voie. Au fond de sa forêt, il est ailleurs; il est à Paris." Nature and circumstance combined to make him what he was, one of the most notable illustrations of weakness in strength that the world has seen, enemy to no one but himself, suspicious of every friend, but a firm believer in the goodness of human nature at large.

The Society mothers whom Rousseau denounces and on whom he cries may very possibly be matched to-day, but for the vast mass of contemporary motherhood there is nothing to detain us in the recommendations on purely physical matters with which the earlier pages are filled. Man in his natural state, is, as we have already seen, wholly virtuous, as Rousseau understands virtue. If, as we know him, he has his faults, it results from nothing but mistaken education; so speaks the husband of Julie, through whose mouth Rousseau is, for the moment, addressing Philistinism generally in the person of St. Preux. This granted, it follows that the natural disposition should be allowed time to crystallize before active education is begun. On this conclusion, which would be admissible enough if the major premiss were not so glaringly false, Rousseau bases his system. Admitting, as he does, every possible difference between one man and another, except in this one element of goodness, he lays it down as essential that the first ten or twelve years of a boy's life should be devoted to the encouragement of the body, while the mind is allowed almost to lie fallow. The bent of some natures is so strong that it cannot be mistaken, and everything good or bad is alike assimilated and turned to purpose; but Rousseau will tell us that, in the great majority of

instances, to attempt education before the character has made itself clear, to begin working on a material with the properties of which you have absolutely no acquaintance, all of which follows from making an early start, is to court disaster. Persistence may mean success in preventing the true disposition of the pupil from ever showing itself, but cannot make it become other than it is, a proposition not easy to reconcile with the aforesaid theory of degradation.

The corollary of this large and unsupported assumption is the denial of morality or reason to childhood. Reason, by some strange perversity, is assumed not to grow with the years, but to spring up in a moment half-mature, as if it were a sudden gift from heaven.

Rousseau, who tells us that he would rather be a man of paradox than one of prejudice, hastens to assume the former character without making it quite clear that he avoids the latter, by declaring, as he does over and over again in one form or another, that the greatest, the most vital rule of education is not to gain time, but to know how to lose it, and he will have it that, if time is lost as it ought to be, the child whose stock-in-trade at twelve consists of a well-nourished and active body, and a mind the tablets of which are still almost unsullied, will so make use of those seem-

ingly modest acquirements as to be level with his contemporaries in three years.

It is plain that the child becomes at once far more difficult of approach if we can appeal neither to the germ of conscience nor to that of reason. Rousseau, however, who was imbued with a notion of the stern law of necessity which Greek literature made familiar to us, and Victor Hugo has illuminated with the light of romance, finds in it a controlling power which serves his turn. The dim consciousness of impotence must necessarily be common to all children at an early age, and their reliance on others, manifested in the cries and tears which, as our author puts it, forge the first link in the long chain of which social order is formed, opens a ready means of exercising control. When the law is to be enforced there must be no question at all as to its finality. The "No" of the parent is to be like a wall of brass against which the tiny hands may batter in vain, impassive, immovable, and inexorable. This simple substitution of force of circumstances for exercise of authority secures a course of conduct in the child which is almost purely mechanical, and, where morality is denied, it is a strictly logical proceeding. The result, of course, is that, as there is no authority, there is no obedience; and where there is no obedience there can be no

rewards or punishments, as such, even of a grosser nature. If, for instance, we take the case of a child who has made itself troublesome by breaking windows, inasmuch as he acts purely from the destructive impulse which is common to the young, we accept it in silence and have the glass replaced. If the thing occurs again, we are to say drily—a device which is either meaningless to a child or distinctly harmful, but a very favourite one with Rousseau—"The windows are my property," and proceed to shut him up in a dark room. He will probably appeal to a servant to let him out—he is struggling against circumstances, and not against authority, be it remembered, and his action is quite justifiable, since evil exists only in the intention—but his tutor has, of course, been beforehand, and the well-drilled servant refuses, on the ground that he, too, has his glass to preserve. Finally, on a hint which his child catches, he proposes to give up glass-breaking in exchange for liberty, a thing which he is only too glad to do, and is restored to freedom. This brief illustration is enough in itself to expose the utterly unnatural character of the system on which the prophet of Nature works, but there are one or two points which call for particular attention.

It must have occurred to us at once that the

law of Necessity, by itself, was a far from adequate equipment for the parent or tutor. An active, moving principle is every bit as essential as one of control, but it was left quite unprovided for so long as the sense of powerlessness in the child gave the only hold on him. We have now learnt that this is to be supplemented by a sense of expediency pure and simple. It will be noticed that the proposition just mentioned comes, or so the child believes, from himself and not from his tutor, and it is vital, if Rousseau was right in his estimate of child character, that it should do so. A promise extracted from a child, as we now learn, means absolutely nothing to him; give him a cake, and he will undertake to jump out of window directly he has eaten it, but when the cake is finished, so is the whole transaction so far as he is concerned. If, however, the undertaking is his own, it is so because he has seen clearly that he will be no loser. Here, then, is direct encouragement of a most ignoble and debasing impulse. "Speak to him of obedience," says Rousseau, "and he will not understand you; tell him to do something, he will not hear you; but say, 'If you will gratify me in such and such a way, I will do the same by you when I have an opportunity,' and instantly he will do his best to carry out your wishes."

There is another noteworthy feature in this episode which sins against all one's established ideas of the proper attitude towards a child, and that is the evident pre-arrangement of the scenes through which he passes. Ask any man or woman what qualities they consider most essential in dealing with a child, and it will be surprising if they do not name straightforwardness among the first. Rousseau will have none of that: if his goal is truth, he marches to it along the path of deception, and seeks nature among the trickeries of the stage. Not only is every servant in the house trained to act a part, but the gardener is taught to fly into an assumed passion, so that Émile, who has been using his spade not wisely but too well, may learn not to interfere with the rights of property. To know Émile is, indeed, to submit yourself bound hand and foot to the dramatic instincts of the tutor, who pre-arranges everything, even to the meeting of his *protégé* with the woman who has been marked out for his wife. Indeed, one almost forgets that it is a philosopher who is expounding his system, and begins to laugh—with the writer—when he describes the astonished disappointment of the tutor on discovering a scene between a *confrère* and his pupil, which he had taken to be a regular set piece after his

own heart, to be a mere unrehearsed effect after all.

Did Rousseau realize the thinness of the ice he would have been treading all this time, or was he blind to the necessary result of discovery? A little bit of over-acting, too pronounced an assumption of innocence, and his influence would have had a deservedly short shrift. Indeed, he speaks at another time as if he comprehended fully the importance of the pupil's belief in his tutor being sustained.

The virtues of the method are still to seek. Morality we have seen denied; we have been told that the child who gives alms does so, because he looks for a handsome compensation, that to treat youth as reasonable is to make it disputatious, to put a child on his honour is to teach him to lie, and to exert authority to foster mutiny; but all this and more than this is explicable when we remember the nature of the society in Paris at that date, upon his experience of which Rousseau based his views. Of course he argued wrongly from the results which were before him, but an unreasonable, untrustworthy, selfish and mutinous habit is so easily engendered in childhood by faults of omission and commission in the parent, that a too hasty denial of qualities, which a clearer insight would have shown to be there all the time

struggling vainly to the light, is at least an intelligible mistake.

If we once realize that for Rousseau the evidence for his conclusions was convincing, we shall see that he had no alternative, but to enlist some form of the law of necessity in his service, and the proceeding is all the more natural when we remember what education meant for him. The end which he proposed was not likely to be a conventional one: the ideas which went to feed the French Revolution, the sentiments which, later, Robespierre took for his own, break out in every page. The dignity of labour; the equality of man, the merits of good citizenship are his watchwords; Nature his goddess. He will train up no mere gentleman, as Locke did, he has not that honour, but a man of simple habits, of few desires and ready hands, a man sociable and friendly who reads in no book but that of Nature, who honours age more than office, and exalts busy toilers above mere intellectual eminence, who listens to the voice of wisdom, and not to that of opinion, loves the beautiful, and pursues the right. For him the best educated man is the one who knows best how to bear the ups and downs of life, and his training must be by experience and not by precept. If a hardening process is to be gone through, and Rousseau believes that no man is fit for the battle

of life without it, it is manifest that the child cannot too soon make acquaintance with the stern logic of facts.[1] If the disillusionment comes late in life it will be all the rougher, and the subject will be less well qualified to endure it. "Let a child," says M. de Wolmar, "encounter the chagrin which must inevitably come one day or another at an early stage, and in a correspondingly mild form." Briefly, the child as soon as it realizes anything will find itself a member of a republic in little, not the crowned king of the household. Baldly put, a system of passive resistance to impotent tears seems a harsh one, but if refusal is to be absolute, so is assent to be unconditional. Rousseau will tell us that if the fancies of a child are once given way to, he will become a tyrant. Nature has made him feeble, because his tendencies are all destructive, but if he is able to turn all about him into his agents, he will wreak his mad will like a Caligula of the nursery. I have seen a child, he says, who wished to have the house upset, who would play Mahomet to the mountain, and set down the impotence of his

[1] Sainte-Beuve says very strangely, "Un philosophe du xviiie siècle, plus sensé que Jean Jacques (the Abbé Galiani) recommande deux points avant tout dans l'éducation: apprendre aux enfants à supporter l'injustice ; leur apprendre à supporter l'ennui."

slaves to sheer rebellion. The child, then, must, when the occasion comes, submit to the inexorable yoke of facts as distinguished from that of will, but, generally speaking, he will be accorded a measure of liberty which, at first sight at any rate, appears much fuller than anything we are accustomed to, and is only bounded where it trenches on the liberty of others. More liberty, less empire, that is, in sum, the keynote. The earliest tears of a child are prayers; they may easily become commands, if due distinctions are not made, but they must not be lightly disregarded: for good or bad, they are his only means of communication, and to ignore them, or treat them as a crime, is to evoke a lasting sense of injustice. All this may seem too trivial to occupy a philosopher, but if he did not esteem it beneath his notice, it is worth ours too, because it serves to correct the impression of severity which a less particular scrutiny undoubtedly creates. That is far enough from Rousseau's mind. "Why," he rather asks of parents at large, "why destroy the happiness of those young innocents during the brief years which slip away so fast?" All this time the hardening process is going on. Rousseau certainly makes a great mistake in wishing to accustom his young charge to the sight and touch of things which are absolutely revolting in them-

selves, whether it is done by degrees or not, and, when he instances Hector taking off his helmet and coaxing the reluctant Astyanax to touch the plumes, betrays an imperfect understanding of the bearing of his own proposals. There was nothing really terrifying in the helmet itself; Hector's proceeding was laudable enough, and in the innocence of the dreaded object lies the distinction, but acquaintance with what is hideous and startling must either unduly blunt the sensibilities, or shatter the nerves, and when to this is added an ordered irregularity in meals, bedtime, and length of sleep—so that nothing may be the result of habit and everything of actual need—it is plain that this will indeed be a case of the survival of the fittest. A hard life multiplies pleasurable sensations, urges Rousseau, which is true enough in a sense, but a rare degree of bodily strength is an indisputable requisite.

Scattered broadcast over these pages, like gold among the sand, are many of those acute observations, those notes of universal application, those felicitous illustrations which give this book a permanent value, for those who will set themselves to read it. What more happy in a small way than the comparison of the child who is fondly supposed to be precocious to the prophet of the almanac? It would be odd if one pro-

phecy did not come true out of hundreds, and it is equally unlikely that a child should go on talking nonsense indefinitely without happening upon a single jewel of speech. Again, how obvious when once said, and yet how needful the warning, that what words mean to us, they may not, and probably do not, mean to the child; that with him nothing must be left to be understood, or you will find that the world is supposed to be made of paper because his own globe is so, and that the equator is a visible and material girdle to the earth. But all this must be sought in the book itself; there is, however, one scene which ought to be reproduced because, whether it had any foundation in fact or not, it exposes so happily the futility of supposing that a child can rise sufficiently from the concrete to the abstract to take an intelligent part in the discussions of his elders. It appears that at a certain dinner whereat our tutor was present, the question arose as to whether Alexander was to be rather blamed for his rashness or applauded for his courage in drinking the medicine which he had every reason to suppose had been prepared for his destruction: the debate waxed high: the tutor, who tells the story, modestly nursed his own superiority, and only informs his readers that, to a man of understanding, Alexander's merit of course lay in the

practical assertion of his belief in human goodness; the *petit bonhomme* was not so reticent and gave his vote for courage rather than rashness amid acclamations. Subsequently the tutor, who had his suspicions, took the boy for a walk in the park; all his chatter was still of the Macedonian's unprecedented pluck, but wherein did he believe it to consist? Merely in this, that he had drunk an ill-tasting dose at one breath and without changing countenance.

With all his devotion to bodily training, Rousseau did not, of course, look forward to having a mere well-developed animal on his hands after twelve years' training. He puts reason aside altogether for the time, but he devotes himself untiringly to perfecting the senses in the performance of their various functions, and this he shows to be possible without condemning his pupil to the sedentary life which he declares with justice to be abhorrent to youth; the sharpening of the senses being the end, the more particular branches of learning with which education is generally concerned are regarded simply as means and quite devoid of any intrinsic value. Thus we find that, if Émile is to be taught drawing, it is in no degree for the sake of the art itself, but for the sake of the sympathy between hand and eye which it fosters. With the same object the child

shall be encouraged to disport himself at tennis or billiards, and shall intensify his sense of touch by playing various musical instruments and by accustoming himself to doing things in the dark. Further, he shall learn by experience the elementary principles of mechanics and hydrostatics, and, as his reason grows, shall work out for himself—for the tutor is never to do more than start a train of thought—the motion of the earth; he shall learn and calculate weights, number, and distance, the relation which sight bears to hearing —with the velocity of light and sound—and that of smell to taste, in which connection, Rousseau, who is now bent on reality, takes occasion to declaim against the common custom of smothering a powder in sugar, because it makes null and void the wise dispensation of Nature in setting the nose as the Cerberus of the palate. The Central African who answered his European guest's objection to dine off stinking fish by saying that one does not eat the smell, dealt in subtleties which do not make our philosopher's appeal less logical, however strained its application. Such an education as this, in which object lessons supersede books, and experience takes the place of teaching has nothing in common with a town life. Man is no book for child to read in, whether he be the man in the street or

the man of history, of the workings of whose mind the historian says so little, of his mere physical actions so much. There is no book, indeed, which is not useless at this stage, for, as yet, it would only offer mere words without ideas. Memory's day too will come, but not till the light of reason is already above the horizon, for her real province is to supply the raw material for reason to work upon, the recepts, as they have been called, in the association of which the concept has its being. And if books are valueless, so too is the multiplication of languages. Cornelius O'Dowd once said that no great linguist was ever a great man, because the art consists not in the mere adoption of words, but of ideas, in a change of mental attitude, and argues a want of backbone and conviction in its possessor; so Rousseau will tell us, looking at his subject from a different standpoint, that to give a child a second language is merely to double his stock of synonyms, for he is capable of nothing further, and not to give him the corresponding modification of ideas, in which language really consists.

The boy is now supposed to have reached his twelfth year, and we have already seen the beginnings of the reign of reason. Purely Utopian as is Rousseau's scheme as a whole, and he really owns to so much himself, there is something

fascinating in its unshackled originality—for we may say that it is original though Plato has been laid under contribution—and in the daring thoroughness which will allow nothing to be food for memory which has not been thoroughly grasped, which enables us to bear the obvious artificiality and insincerity of a method in which the child is entrapped into lessons when he least suspects it, in which the semblance of liberty conceals a real subjection, in which stones are for ever supplying sermons, and nothing is too humble to point a moral. The rules are not intended to be hard and fast, and the results achieved might escape being unpleasant, but no other epithet is applicable to the *enfant terrible* to whom Rousseau proudly points in vindication of his theories.

It may be thought that all this has little bearing on the education of to-day; this might be arguable, but the interest of the further developments is certainly more academic in character. So far we have been merely putting in the foundations; the actual superstructure is now to be built up, and Rousseau begins by casting about for something which shall express vividly the sort of "handiness" which he believes to be the important feature in the education of rich and poor alike, for, as he says, "We trust in the order

of society as it exists without reflecting that it must necessarily be the plaything of revolutions." He finds what he wants in his choice of a manual of education which is not Aristotle, nor Buffon, but Robinson Crusoe. If his meaning had been obscure before, it would have been patent now. Man must be a good citizen, but he must be a little republic in himself, independent and self-sufficient as if he were born to live under the ideal conditions of a state of Nature. Let him then, at least, whatever his station, learn a trade (we have not far to look for a modern parallel): there is a solid resource in that, and the more nearly it is allied to Nature the more honourable is it. This clearly points to agriculture, where the relations are of the most direct kind possible; but it by no means excludes other trades, and, as a matter of fact, Émile, to whom it was already familiar, becomes the apprentice or, as Rousseau prefers to phrase it, the "disciple" of a joiner, not so much for the sake of learning joinery as such, as to raise himself to the position of a joiner. The truly republican flavour with which the whole system of education is tinged is shown not less in the work that is done than in the conditions under which it is done. Each man or boy is the citizen above everything, the unit in a large society of equals, and his work is, so to speak, to

be regarded not as an individual production but as a contribution, bad or good,—by whom made no matter—to the common fund of labour products. Rousseau has discountenanced anything like emulation from the first; he denies this stimulus altogether now; and when Émile is preparing to take to himself the praises of a piece of work which is his own, the tutor says coldly, "The work is yours or someone else's; it is none the less well done." Nothing could point more clearly the paramount nature of the claims of society, and at the very end of all when Émile, now fully equipped for life, decides to cast in his lot definitely with his fellow-men, and not to live for himself alone, the decision is acclaimed. Nor are the duties of the citizen to be evaded because the door of his fatherland is barred against its son! Wherever the man lives, there is his country, and he owes her allegiance. Has the social contract been made void, is the will of the people ignored, still there are laws of one kind or another which have secured him a measure of quietude; even if they are unjust, the sight of oppression has made the image of liberty more dear. Had he been born and nurtured in the depths of the forest, he might have been happier, his share of freedom larger, but his goodness would have been a mere passive quality instead of

that strong and active virtue, which is born in the subjugation of passion. Still there runs a thread of antagonism to this dependence on man throughout the book, as if its writer were putting the pros and cons to himself no less than to his imaginary pupil. At one moment he speaks as he has done above, at another he calls on man if he would be happy, to restrict his intercourse, and to put his dependence wholly on things, and not men, if he would be free. Here speaks the man whom the most earnest remonstrances of his friends could not keep from his well-loved solitudes, but the expression of his own personal predilections does little to disturb the obvious tenour of his teaching, and we shall see, now that the study of manhood is to begin, how sedulously he nourishes a feeling of love and pity for humanity.

Human nature unfortunately, as Rousseau knew it in the world of Paris, would, as he felt, have been more likely to shock a boy whose life had been spent in a state of pastoral innocence, than to move his sympathy; as yet indeed his education has not taught him the meaning of the latter word, but, as he has by this time become familiar with suffering, he can easily be moved to compassion, as Ulysses was when he looked on Ajax distraught, if it is suggested to him that his own turn may come. Extend your self-love to others,

says Rousseau, and it will become a virtue, a sentiment which may be Aristotelian, but is not convincing.

If, however, innocence is to look on worldliness without contempt, he must first have taken to himself the doctrine, which his tutor would have been quite sincere in teaching him, that man is naturally all that is good though society may be all that is bad. He must see man as he is, not as he appears, and recognize that while all, collectively, are contemptible, each, individually, calls for a profound pity. Let him turn now to history and there judge mankind calmly and judicially, remembering all the time that the historian habitually selects man's darker side, and let him study in the incomparable Plutarch the behaviour of the great in the little things of life, for there more than anywhere else the picture of the man of the market place finds its balance and complement in the intimate study of the man of the domestic hearth.

The question of religious instruction is too large to enter upon here, and it must suffice to say that, speaking broadly, Rousseau would envelop the idea of God in a profound mystery, trusting, with some show of reason, to impress the pupil's imagination more completely in that way, than by any specific teaching. This, at any rate, must

suffice till, in the natural course of its expansion, the mind becomes persistently engrossed with such lofty matters. His own religion, while he preaches in other things the sternest refusal to take anything for granted, is strictly emotional. The movement of matter convinces him of the existence of a supreme will, the fact that it moves in accordance with certain recognized laws denotes intelligence in that will. "I recognize one supreme will which directs all creation, and one supreme power which carries all that is willed into execution. I attribute the will and the power to the same Being because they are in so perfect an accord." Man is a complex being; he has promptings for good and promptings for ill, and the web of his life is, in the same way, woven with joy and sorrow, with wickedness and virtue; but if there is this evil in the world, man is himself responsible for it: he need look no further. He is placed on the earth with freedom to choose the worse or the better part, so that he may work out his own happiness—the supreme contentment of a satisfied conscience—by trampling under foot the desires of his animal nature. The triumph of the wicked on earth is proof positive that the true life, the life of the soul, is beyond the grave, and while its blessedness will consist in the serene contemplation of a life well

spent on earth—Rousseau, as Hazlitt pointed out, loved to live in the recollections of the past—the wicked man will find his punishment in an eternity of bitter and unavailing reflection,

"Virtutem videant, intabescant que relictâ."

He denies all revelation, as generally accepted, on *a priori* grounds, but practically substitutes for his own personal support, a revelation which has no better credentials than the cravings of his nature. "What," he says, "if there were but one man in the whole world, to whose ears the word of God, as revealed, had never come, would not that be enough to discredit it?" To which we may reply that his reliance on the beauty of the world as the sign of a beneficent Maker would be just as completely answered, if there was a single human being in existence who knew no other world than the Black Country.

But, if religion is to be postponed, some sheet anchor must be found to hold the frail barque from drifting on to a lee shore, a point which naturally did not escape a too susceptible Rousseau; but, as he says with much justice, the moral obliquities of a young man are much more generally a concession to opinion, than the outcome of any personal predisposition. His natural

bent is rather towards friendship and hero-worship, and if, in Émile's case, this tendency is not well defined, he has, at least, an absolute disregard for opinion, and a large degree of self-regard. Rousseau, however, thinks the danger a real one, and he proposes to meet it in two ways, the one physical and the other moral, by tiring the body, and giving pre-occupation to the imagination. The first object is to be attained by a persistent devotion to the pleasures of the chase, and the second by the setting up of a high ideal, of which the young man shall become enamoured, the fantasy having substance given to it by being endowed with a name—Sophie. Thus the second expedient proves little less mechanical than the first, and we are still face to face with the fault which has been our bane from the very beginning. The meeting of Émile and the real Sophie is the climax of deception: it results from an elaborately arranged accident in which Sophie's parents take part, and the young man's involuntary tremor when he hears the well-loved name is looked for by several pairs of eyes; Sophie, on her side, has been worked up to the proper pitch by the study of Fénélon's Télémaque, and she at once endows Émile with all the qualities of that hero. In point of fact these two young people were no more free agents

than if they had been driven to the altar at the point of the sword.

With the two years' probation, during which tutor and pupil "ran through some of the larger states of Europe, and many of the smaller, learning two or three of the principal languages, seeing all that merited attention, whether in natural history, in government, in the arts, or in mankind," we need not particularly concern ourselves. Their study was rather the societies which peopled the countries through which they passed than the countries themselves. We have seen that for the child the consideration of things must precede that of men, but when years of discretion have been reached the case is the exact reverse, and Émile must be taught by experience that the Parisian does not adequately represent mankind at large. But if this was the purpose which the journey was ostensibly to fulfil, there was another reason at bottom, and that a purely moral one. Mere physical pain has been met and vanquished; death is regarded with something of the indifference of the savage; but the moral victory over the passions has still to be won, for so far they have been diverted rather than faced. Here Rousseau rises, almost for the first time in practice, however often in words, to a higher level and a purer atmosphere than we are accustomed

to breathe in his company; but this is the last touch, and in a moment we find him presenting to us as his handiwork a man in whose armour of perfection there is no discoverable flaw, who is whole in mind and body, full of sense, of reason, of humanity, pursuing the good and the beautiful, master of his passions, no slave to public opinion, but amenable to the dictates of wisdom, and obedient to the voice of friendship, possessing every useful talent, and many agreeable ones. So the catalogue goes on; it is not new to us as an aspiration, but it is now presented to us for the first time as an actuality. Are we to take the artist at his own valuation, or may we not ask whether our Pygmalion is justified in believing that his marble-cold creation is now informed by the breath of every virtue? Confining ourselves to the moral aspect of the matter, is it possible, we ask in amazement, that a human being whose mainspring has for so long been pure selfishness could ever be to his fellow-men what Rousseau would have us believe? Is love of self a quality which needs but extension to be love of mankind, or is it not rather something which will brook no rival, but grows with the years till it reigns undisputed on the throne of the affections? Is he a truly moral man, who is moral by habit rather than by conviction, who has known nothing of self-

restraint but impotence, who has curbed his anger because he believed it to be a physical seizure, who has been truthful because a lie could never advantage him, who has befriended his associates that he might be befriended in his turn, who has lived for the moment and left the future to itself, whose compassion is rooted in self-regard, who has had the spirit of opposition trampled down in him, and has not been allowed to quell it? All these are merely the virtues of passivity, the virtues of the man who lives within four walls, untempted and unassailed; yet it is Rousseau himself who asks how we can be virtuous without a combat, or strong if we have not subdued weak nature to our will. Strange words these for one who does his best to change a moral being into a machine. No! the choice must be made once for all. Morality stands on one side, habit on the other, but they cannot dwell under the same roof tree. It is easy enough to assume that all means to a good end must be good, that the end will abide by the pupil while the means sink into oblivion; but habits cannot so easily be taken up and discarded, points of view shifted, and old lessons forgot, as Rousseau implies. He deludes himself if he believes that he has reached his goal, for the man whom he vaunts so confidently with his many-storeyed Tower of Virtues is like a house

that is built on the sands. Let the winds once blow, and the rain beat, and its foundations will crumble from under it.[1]

[1] Lamartine was brought up on Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint Pierre, in general accordance with the system propounded in Émile, and the priggishness which is the natural result of so unreal a method was fatally conspicuous in him. What man of the most ordinary perception, let alone one naturally so well endowed as he was, could have indulged in self-adulation of the kind which meets one on every page of "Les Confidences," unless his education had been radically and actively wrong?

"Cette vie entièrement pasannesque, et cette ignorance absolue de ce que les autres enfants savent à cet âge, n'empêchaient pas que mon éducation familière ne fit de moi *un des esprits les plus justes*, un des cœurs les plus aimants," &c., &c.

"J'étais alors *un des plus beaux enfants* qui aient jamais foulé de leurs pieds nus les pierres de nos montagnes, où la race humaine est cependant si saine et si belle," &c. Then follows a description of his personal and moral beauties, incredibly bad in taste, and finally, on his going to college, 'Je ressemblais à une statue d'Adolescence enlevée au moment de l'abri des autels pour être offerte en modèle aux jeunes hommes."

"S'il (Lamartine himself) eût tenu un pinceau, il aurait peint La Vierge de Foligno; s'il eût manié le ciseau, il aurait sculpté la Psyché de Canova; s'il eût connu la langue dans lequel on écrit les sons, il aurait noté les plaintes aériennes du vent de mer dans les fibres des pins d'Italie . . . s'il eût été poëte, il aurait écrit les apostrophes de Job à Jehovah, les stances d'Herminie du Tasse, la conversation de Roméo et Juliette au clair de lune de Shakspeare, le portrait d'Haydé de Lord Byron . . . s'il eût vécu dans ces républi-

ques antiques . . . il aurait aspiré à tous les sommets comme César, il aurait parlé comme Démosthène, il serait mort comme Caton."

There are even more extravagant passages than these, but a critique of the whole will be found among the "Causeries du lundi."

THE EDUCATION OF GARGANTUA.

It has never been quite settled, and, for the matter of that, never can be, how far Rabelais' work was governed by a serious purpose, and how far he could have said of it, as Tristram Shandy did of his autobiography, "If 'tis wrote against anything, 'tis wrote, an please your worships, against the spleen." In Rabelais' lifetime, the general tendency was to look on his serious side, and to laud the man of encyclopædic knowledge, or to hold up to obloquy the enemy of the Church and of all clean living, while forgetting the man of wisdom and wit. But when death had dimmed the sense of his strong personality, it became the turn of the other scale in the balance to kick the beam. Nothing was talked of but his strange and unseasonable levity, his highly irreverent bearing in the presence of the Pope, or that last flicker of an expiring humour with which he passed to the actual bar of death.

We may believe as much or as little as we like; if we err it is not likely to be on the side of credulity, but now that we can look down the long perspective of years it is possible to see and appre-

ciate the man in his entirety. Rabelais was not, as Sydney Smith said of St. Paul, a thousand men, but he was more than the traditional pair which every nineteenth-century waistcoat even is said to shelter.[1] He was a typical figure in an age when the individual was more many-sided than he is now, and turned out less remorselessly to pattern, less like a larch, as Dr. Brown expresses it, of which "if you have seen one you have seen a thousand, and if you have seen one of its sides, you have seen all," with more manhood in youth and more of the freshness of boyhood in middle age; grave and gay, purposeful and irresponsible, a prophet and a boon companion. It is idle to try to resolve the complex whole into its constituent parts. We must take him frankly as we find him. It is futile to spell over one of his "jolly chapters" as if there were an undiscovered world of innuendo in it only awaiting its Columbus. That is to confess a constitutional inability to appreciate him, but it is of just as little use to shut our eyes to the strong motive which is continually cropping up, like bedrock, through the slender covering of wit and fancy. This is true of

[1] Three, says Doctor Holmes:

α. The man as he is.

β. As he sees himself.

γ. As he thinks his friends see him.

every book of the series, but there is one, "The Gargantua," which is distinguished from the others by a certain consistency and consecutiveness so that it might almost be placed in a class apart.

Monasticism, long before Rabelais' day, had called into existence a power too strong for it, and had taught the world beyond the monastery walls to know its strength. The true spirit of education had passed away into other keeping, only the dry bones remained. The very weapons which the monasteries in the days of their strength had forged and tempered were now, in episcopal and secular hands, turned to their destruction, and Rabelais, ex-monk, in this the first book of the well-known series, brings his finished rapier-play to bear on the ponderous and unwieldy body of traditional education, for which his early familiarity with it had bred a profound contempt and dislike.

The study of Gargantua's extreme youth is not a particularly edifying one; all that he did was done with a will, but then it was precisely the wrong thing. His mind was allowed to lie dormant, so far as any specific instruction went, while his body was developing, in the way which Rousseau was afterwards so passionately to advocate, but if it were true of all humanity besides, as Rousseau would have us believe, that the predisposition is to things virtuous, yet this one child

was an unfortunate instance of the contrary tendency. Nor does it appear that he was even content to take things as he found them, and leave first causes to his elders. The spirit of inquiry was out and abroad like a butterfly while it should still have been in the chrysalis state. Rabelais does not tell us what directions this inquisitiveness took except in a single instance, but that one nameless and exhaustive series of experiments is enough.

This altogether precocious development, this evidence of scientific and scrupulous thoroughness, was the signal for the beginning of his education. Grandgousier, struck by so obvious a foreshadowing of greatness in his son, as Philip had been by the young Alexander's evidence of character on a quite parallel occasion, hurried to put all the machinery in motion which should set the seal of perfection on its promise. No trouble was to be spared, no expense grudged; a celebrated doctor in theology was engaged to teach him his alphabet, and so well were the worthy man's efforts rewarded that within the space of five years and three months Gargantua had committed it to memory. The "De modis significandi" with various learned commentaries thereon was mastered so thoroughly in eighteen years and eleven months that the apt pupil was able to say it by heart backwards, a feat which leaves the subsequent *tours de*

force of Macaulay very far behind. There is a good deal more of the same excellent fooling. Assuredly it is not wanting in point, but the attack is veiled under the genial breadth of the comedy. The times comes, however, when Grandgousier is touched by the suspicion that things after all are not quite rose-coloured, and then Rabelais speaks out in earnest. "Such teachers," he says, "are worse than nothing, their teaching is mere stultification, their wisdom folly." "Five years with a bib under his chin; four years in travelling from Christ-Cross Row to Malachi; a year and a half in learning to write his own name; seven years and more τύπτω-ing it at Greek and Latin; four years at his probations and negations—the fine statue lying in the middle of the marble block, and nothing done but the tools sharpened to hew it out! 'Tis a piteous day." Sterne only translated the feelings of his great model into racy English. Grandgousier looks round for confirmation of his doubts, and it is not delayed. The young Eudemon, the first fruit of the new education, is introduced to him, and the painful contrast between Gargantua's boorish demeanour, and the assured yet modest bearing and ready wit of the other determines the anxious father to put his son under the care of this Ponocrates who has such results to show for his teaching.

Ponocrates is in no hurry to put his ideas into execution. Arrived in Paris with his pupil, he sits down quietly to watch him, and to learn exactly what he has to combat, and, briefly, this is what he sees. The day is begun with a heavy meal. Ponocrates thinks it right to remonstrate, but Gargantua assures him that he has turned over several times in bed, and that the exercise has naturally given him an appetite. After breakfast he goes to church for a modicum of lip-service, then to the cloisters or garden to repeat so many Paternosters, and then a brief half-hour's pretence of reading while the student in imagination snuffs the savoury joys of the coming dinner. After the meal which, at least, is no make-believe, relaxation is sought in cards and dice. The siesta follows, and in its train comes mighty potations; Ponocrates shrugs his shoulders as before, but again criticism is disarmed; Gargantua, it appears, has the particularity of sleeping salt,

> "Quand je m'éveille je veux boire,
> Ah! je crois que je dors salé;"

forty winks represent to him for purposes of thirst, so many salt hams, and a proportionately generous measure of relief is indispensable. This done, the untiring young man is off to see a rabbit netted, and then to the kitchen with sharpened

appetite to take stock of the supper. The long work-day is over; the end of the meal is the signal for the resumption of the post-prandial games, and then to bed to sleep the clock round.

This is hardly the sort of picture to conciliate its subject, and it is the monkish system of education which has been sitting for its portrait, nor is it quite the sort of criticism to incite to better things, but when due allowance has been made for the grotesque license the caricaturist has allowed himself, it is not difficult to recognize the solid truth through the figment, the purely formal character of all monastic intellectual activity, as of the student who should sit before his book for hours and be satisfied not to cast his eyes once on the page. What is it that Rabelais says elsewhere? "The greatest waste of time there is is to count the hours. To govern by the clock instead of following the dictates of good sense and intelligence is folly." This is precisely what monastic life had been drifting into. It moved round and round in a vicious circle without even the ambition to gain a yard in advance. The day's occupations had become a mere framework, without the filling-in; a way to kill time, not to turn it to purpose.

With the change from destructive to construcive criticism we pass to a different key. Naturally we are still well within hail of the

gigantic. Gargantua does not shrivel up into ordinary dimensions just because he is learning to turn the thews of mind and body to account, but there is a proportion and an air of reality about the exaggeration; the picture is all to scale except when the painter, dead in earnest, feels perhaps that the truth is big and impressive enough in itself to stand in line with the creations of fable, buskin and all.

As one reads, one could almost believe that Rabelais had had an early copy of Émile put into his hands, and was making a good-humoured travesty of it, with its sane and wholesome features exaggerated and its sickliness and falseness wiped out. No one can realize how big the master was who does not know something of the disciples. Rabelais was Gargantua himself in his great, simple, unaffected, pleading for the rights of common sense; with all his faults too, Rousseau was not without a leaven of precious metal; for the rest he was a half-way house in the Avernian descent from Rabelais to Bernardin de St. Pierre.

The essence of Rabelais' system is the time-honoured conjunction of sane mind and sane body, and the means to that end the scrupulous care to overtax neither brain nor stomach, to exercise both without overtiring them, to stimu-

late without over-exciting, in a word to secure the proper assimilation of food bodily no less than mental. In his system the circumstances at any given moment are everything, the general rules nothing. His subject matter is not a machine, but a human being with its fluctuations of health and energy, and a human being he will leave it when his work is complete. His regimen is, in its way, the affirmation of the principle of the liberty of the subject, and the negation of red tape and all its works. This, however, will appear more clearly in the results of his system as he displays them in the constitution and personnel of the Brotherhood of Thelema. He has been called a Platonist, and Plato was, no doubt, his familiar and engrossing study, but neither he nor, we may add, Rousseau, maintained that indifference to the practical which marked all Greek philosophers. Rabelais' philosophy was not, as Macaulay, with the contrast between the teaching of Plato and Bacon in his mind, said of the former, "a philosophy of thorns," but one of fruits.

Once assured that the edifice of Gargantua's education is beyond hope of restoration in the most thorough-going sense of the word, and must be rebuilt from the very foundations, Ponocrates sets to work without more ado. The lie-a-bed of

yesterday, finds himself to-day up and about and in process of being rubbed down at four o'clock in the morning; nor is Ponocrates disposed to waste the hours which he is stealing from the night. While Gargantua is in the hands of the rubbers a page of Holy Writ is read to him, to be subsequently commented on and explained, and here, at the very beginning, we are face to face with an admirable feature which we meet again and again, viz., the systematic thoroughness with which the page read in the morning is elucidated later on, is talked over in the afternoon, summed up and mastered at night. There are no loose threads, no fraying away at the edges, no waste of energy or loss of material: everything is learnt reasonably and not mnemonically, looked at all round and considered in all its bearings, viewed, not in the abstract, but in its concrete relations, once learnt, never forgotten. How odious the mere superficial knowledge of a hundred subjects was to this most thorough of educationalists is clear from the little allegory in the last book of which "Hearsay" is the subject.

Hearsay was a little dwarf with jaws split open to his ears, and within it seven tongues, each tongue riven into seven points, and all seven, as we are told, were speaking at the same time on various subjects and in different languages: on

his head and body were as many ears as Argus of old had eyes; for the rest he was blind and his legs were paralyzed. Round him were a crowd of men and women, who listened in such wise that in a few hours they became clerkly and learned, and spoke by rote of a thousand things, to *know* a hundredth part of which the life of a man would not suffice.

In the serene consciousness of knowledge hardly acquired the man of science had little patience with that form of information which runs off the tip of the tongue

"In one weak, washy, everlasting flood"

as if the brain had not the strength to retain it; nor was the skilled linguist more tolerant of that pedantry, typified more particularly in the Limousin student whom Pantagruel vainly tries to understand, which sacrifices the mother-tongue to the petty display of half-digested phrase-mongering. Every outlandish piece of word-coinage, every unnatural figure of speech, every hybrid decasyllable, and they are plentiful, is a barbed arrow the more to quiver in the thick hide of the pedant.

But, to return to Ponocrates and his charge; on the completion of the rubbing down a move is made out of doors to study the signs of the sky, as to whether they fulfil the promise of the evening

before, and as to the prospect they hold out. During Gargantua's toilet, which follows, the lessons of the previous day are repeated to him, and he has then to say them by heart, and to show that they mean something to him beyond the mere understanding of the words, by drawing practical deductions from them, as well as showing their application to the ordinary affairs of life. He is then to read for three hours, after which he goes out with his tutor, always discussing what he has been reading about, and plays tennis or some other active game. There is no fixed time limit to the bodily exercise as there was none to the reading. The sense of having done enough is in either case to stand for the last grain of sand in the hour-glass. After being wiped and rubbed down they stroll gently about, reciting clearly and eloquently some of the more striking passages which they have happened upon in the morning's work, and, for the system is not professedly to have anything of a Spartan character about it, giving a thought at moments to the dinner, the *déjeûner*, as it would be now-a-days, which is now imminent. Then to table, when the pleasures of the understanding are not to be wholly sacrificed to those of the palate, for at the beginning of the repast the story of some joyous bout of arms, some deed of chivalry, is commonly

read by one of the company. The passing round of the wine is the signal for increased gaiety; conversation takes the place of reading; the special virtues of the various dishes of which they have eaten are discussed, as well as the manner of their preparation: this leads naturally to the recital and, as time goes on, to the learning of passages from those ancient authors who have touched on the subject, from Pliny, Athenæus or Aristotle; often enough it will fall out that some quotation needs verification, some difference of opinion settling, for which it is necessary to refer to the book itself, and, when it is brought in, a fresh zest is given to the pursuit of the points in debate. In such converse as this the meal is brought to an end, and they rise from table after having sung a grace to the Giver of all good things. This meal, it should be noticed, is not to be a heavy one; it is to satisfy the cravings of hunger, but to leave mind and body well disposed for the business of the afternoon.

So good a doctor as Rabelais, however, would never send his pupil straight from the dinner-table to the desk, and, accordingly, we find that cards are brought in, not for playing, *bien entendu*, but in order to foster a love for the science of numbers, by a thousand ingenious arithmetical puzzles and problems. From this the step to

geometry and astronomy is a natural one, nor is music neglected. Besides taking his share in the four-part singing which ordinarily follows, Gargantua receives instruction in the playing of the lute, the spinet, the harp, the sackbut, and other instruments. The music put away, the main studies are entered upon, and last from three to four hours. The time is divided between a brief recapitulation of his morning's lesson, the continuation of the particular book in hand, and writing. Another spell of strong exercise follows this long period of application, either riding, which includes all the feats of the *haute école*, or tilting, or practice with the battle-axe, pike, or two-handed sword, indeed with every weapon in a well-stocked armoury at one time and another. Gargantua's athletic training, the active side of the Mousikè, which is throughout so obvious a model, is in a large degree regulated by the degree of usefulness possessed by this or that form of exercise in preparing him for war. He is to look forward to service, and to proficiency in the field as well as in the council chamber; but that does not prevent him from hunting the stag, the bear, and the wild boar, from wrestling, running and leaping, or even from playing football. He will swim across the river as Cæsar did, holding his cloak in his teeth, or bearing a book aloft in

his hand, and pull himself by one hand into a boat. Leaving the river, he will run up and down the steepest hills, leap from one tree to another like a squirrel, tear down branches like a Milo, shout like a Stentor, toy with impossible weights like a Sandow. Then, as he had done in the morning, he will be careful to cool down gradually, strolling through the fields, herborizing, taking stock of the trees, and not forgetting to compare his own observations with those of Theophrastus, Nicander, and Pliny. Even now the work of the earlier part of the day is again touched upon, and then, at last, it is the turn of the body to be provided with sustenance. The heat and burden of the day is over, and supper is, very reasonably, on a more liberal scale than the frugal morning meal. The evening is devoted to the intercourse of men of letters or travellers, and then, before the final gathering up of all the stray threads of the day's work, the heavens are once more observed; the oppositions and conjunctions of the stars, as well as the movements of comets, duly noted.

When the weather is wet the morning hours of exercise are spent in sawing wood, threshing corn, or binding hay, or in the less exhausting pursuits of painting and sculpture. On other days Gargantua will visit foundries, manufactories

of ribbon or velvet, the workshops of clockmakers, lapidaries, and workers of precious stones; and in the afternoon, when he cannot botanize in the fields he will follow up his inquiries in the shops of herbalists and apothecaries: actual experience is to supersede mere bookwork, and, whenever possible, object lessons are to be preferred. Of course one may criticize this scheme of education as one does Rousseau's: it is purely ideal and, therefore, unattainable. Gargantua may find his exercises after a time so light and pleasurable that they more resemble a king's leisure than a student's work-day, but reduce them to the scale of humanity, and the ordinary human being will still be quite unequal to them.

But this is no vital defect. Counsels of perfection are not necessarily dispiriting; they may just as well stir to better things. Rabelais, as Ste. Beuve said, puts us to shame in many things, as, for instance, when he includes astronomy and botany among ordinary subjects of education, but when he passes on, as he does in Gargantua's letter to Pantagruel, to enjoin diligence in learning Greek and Latin, Hebrew for the sake of Holy Writ, as well as Chaldean and Arabic among languages; geometry, arithmetic and music among the liberal arts; the legal code and physical science; medicine and surgery, he passes into a

lofty stratum where few but himself can breathe the rarefied air. None the less he convicts us of one sidedness, partiality, superficiality, and unwisdom. Heroic measures, such as his were, are of limited application: we cannot all hope to be admirable Crichtons, Captains of the Eleven and the Sixth; but if the complete course is not for many, Rabelais must surely touch some responsive fibre in everyone: the child who can find nothing to interest in all this wealth of subject matter, who is not seduced into something like enthusiasm by the certainty of having somewhat to show for the pursuit of knowledge under conditions so elastic and yet so stringent, is worthy of being morally exposed on Taÿgetus.

The doctor in Rabelais never slept; at every turn we are met with safeguards which shall duly regulate the proportions of work and leisure. The capacity of the individual is to be the measure of the amount of application to be demanded of him. It remains to notice that, once every month, an entire day is to be spent in the country. For a time free rein is to be given to the animal spirits, and indulgence to the appetite; but as the day grows old, while the tired holiday-makers lie supine in contemplation of the evening sky, the spell of the hour will come upon them, and the grosser pleasures of the day will be forgotten

in the music of the Georgics, or the fresh simplicity of Hesiod. Latin epigrams will be bandied from mouth to mouth, or clothed in the garb of the native rondel, and the mind will become attuned for its activities of the morrow.

The morality of this book, in spite of what, I suppose, we must call its grossness, is of a high order. It is not that Gargantua—or rather Pantagruel, for the special warning occurs in a letter from Gargantua to his son—is told to serve, honour, and fear God, to love his neighbour as himself, to practise humility and charity, to look on life merely as a time of probation, in a word to fulfil both the letter and the spirit of Christianity; but it is that the young man who has been educated under the conditions here laid down—industrious, temperate, and self-respecting—will step into the arena clad in triple brass to resist and subdue the hydra of extravagance, passion, and excess. Such episodes as the generous treatment of Torquedillon restored almost against his will to the ranks of the enemy to lead them into battle afresh, or the set speech of Gargantua to the captains of Picrochole's beaten army which breathes a spirit of the most enlightened clemency and reasonableness, are at once an evidence of Rabelais' aim, and a truly logical outcome of his

training, while the relations of Gargantua and Pantagruel which, amid surroundings of the purest comedy, are treated not merely seriously, but with a profound and consistent respect, testify once more to the loftiness of the ideal which it was his aim to realize. But it is in the constitution and ordinances of the Abbey of Thelema,—a protest in every smallest and least significant detail, as in its whole conception and formulation, against monastic discipline—that we see the pupils of the Master now grown to manhood, fulfilling in their way of life, and in their capacity for so living, the aspirations of the apostle of Liberty. There was one supreme rule for their guidance—"Fay ce que vouldras"—not an exhortation to the license of a Hell-fire club, but the accordance of perfect freedom of action to those who have learnt not to abuse it. There is no Bluebeard's chamber here to stimulate curiosity, no forbidden fruit to tempt to disobedience; "well-born, well-disposed, well-educated," says Rabelais, moving among associates like themselves, such people have a natural, a magnetic attraction towards things virtuous, and a corresponding repulsion for vice, "and this," he adds, "is what we mean by honour." "But to take the yoke of servitude on the shoulders is to court temptation, for we are ever disposed

towards what is forbidden, and covet what is denied."

Rousseau's sentimental regret for the stifled virtues of the natural man was no echo of Rabelais. The boyhood of Gargantua is eloquent on the other side. Human nature is for him neither wholly corrupt nor quite guileless, but the capacity for evil is as well marked as that for good, and it is the mission of education to nourish one in the ashes of the other.

How far Rousseau wandered from his original it is sad to think. Struggling in invisible meshes, pushed and pulled by elfish hands, the pupil of the eighteenth-century philosopher, if he had ever existed in his full development, could have had no conception what freedom was. If eventually he had come to know it, he would have lost it again in license. If he had not, he would have died, as he had lived, a non-moral piece of mechanism. But Rabelais did not know what deception was; he lays his hand on the table for every one to see: it is in his use of the cards that his mastery lies, not in the skill with which he conceals a right bower up his sleeve, and the lesson he teaches his pupil is not the mechanical abstinence from things sinful, but a sobriety in the enjoyment of what life has to offer, not self-love but charity, not self-esteem but humility. Whereas Rousseau

cherished an exotic in a stifling atmosphere and under artificial conditions, Rabelais, two hundred years earlier, had shown the world how the plant might be brought to its perfect growth through the changes and chances of every day existence.

THE POETRY OF THE SEA.

Of the many distinctions which have been drawn between the methods of French and English writers of fiction, none is better founded than that which is concerned with the representative nature of the character-drawing in the one school, and its almost purely individual treatment in the other. This has become a commonplace of criticism. The expression of the type in the individual is a constant factor in the French novel, and is directly responsible for another feature hardly less common—the relatively important part played by the background, or the *milieu* in which the characters of the piece move.

Every individual is indebted to his circumstances and surroundings for being what he is; it is only the degree of indebtedness which varies with the strength or weakness of the inherited character. To give these influences their real prominence is perfectly logical in any case, but when the social characteristics of a people are summed up and epitomized in the man or woman, Nature, which has

had so large a share in their formation, has to be taken even more seriously into account, and French fictional literature, as a whole, speaks to a fundamental perception of this truth.

What climate and configuration do for the race is not easily exaggerated. "The insurgent of the mountain, like the Swiss," says Hugo, "fights for an ideal, for humanity, for liberty. The insurgent of the forest, like the peasant of La Vendée, fights for prejudice, for solitude, for isolation. Nature teaches one the war of headlong bravery, the other the war of ruse and stratagem; the lie of the ground goes for much in shaping man's counsels; the very spirit of the Earth passes into him." No one has ever stated this more strongly, or emphasized it more consistently than Hugo. In every one of his great works human nature is held in the balance against Nature inanimate; whether in emphasis, or in contrast, man is always shown in his relation to things. At one time Nature is the type of passive impersonality, at another it seems vital with a purpose either hostile or sympathetic, but in each of the romances it holds its place as a foil to humanity. Gilliat, whose long-drawn duel with the ocean forms one of the most dramatic chapters in fiction, is the child of the sea; the sea taught him that absorption in one object, that strange

resolution, with which he combats her; the sea put into his hands the very weapons which were to foil her rage. In "Notre Dame" man's own creation standing there in serene dignity puts to shame the petty play of passion and superstition; in "Quatre-vingt treize" the savage quietude of the Breton forest dwarfs with its sublime unheedfulness the eventful passages of revolutionary war; in "Les Misérables" a heroic figure struggles, like Laocoon, in the inexorable grasp of circumstances. Hugo only expresses with some characteristic exaggeration what we all feel at times; who has not realized, if only for moments, how intimate is his relation to the world of Nature? The Whaup, defeated in that Homeric battle with the boys of the village, felt the moor blacker and more silent, the sea more dark. "Thus," says Mr. Black in mock-heroics, "does the human mind confer an anthropomorphic sentiment on all things animate and inanimate." In our own emotional crises we turn to Nature to find consolation or a new happiness in her unbounded receptiveness and apparent sympathy; we appeal, as M. Loti says, to "je ne sais quelles pitiés inconscientes épandues dans l'air." Sun and cloud attend on joy and sorrow; the voices of the night cry out on guilt, as when the dead Duncan lay in his still chamber

"Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman
Which gives the stern'st good-night."

No justification then is needed for the writer who summons Nature to perform the mission in the world of fiction, which she is for ever doing in the larger world of reality.[1] When the sun looked down on the execution of the young and chivalrous Gauvain, Nature was in a cruel mood, pitiless in overwhelming man, as Hugo puts it, with the contrast between a beauty which is divine, and the hideousness of Society; she will not spare him so much as a butterfly's wing or the song of a bird. This is the reflection which the sight of an oyster bedded in an exploded shell suggests to Alphonse Karr—the insignificance of man, the colossal indifference of Nature—but, at bottom, she is our mother, and we are fain to follow Hugo in his other mood, and to endow her with a certain sensibility for her children.

Probably there is nothing in English literature even remotely parallel to such studies as those of Cimourdain and Lantenac, or Valjean, studies

[1] Landor's "Imaginary Conversations":—Anne Boleyn: "The plants, the trees, the very rocks and unsunned clouds, show us at least the semblances of weeping; and there is not an aspect of the globe we live on, nor of the waters and skies around it, without a reference and a similitude to our joys or sorrows."

which by the conjunction and reduplication of individual traits sum up a whole state of society, but almost cease to be human in the result. Again, if English literature is rich in the scene-painting which is little more than an ornamental accessory, if Nature is frequently presented in its pages in a personal form—a treatment which, it is hardly necessary to say, recurs with great frequency and considerable crudeness in Dickens—and is so far brought into touch with the actors that their emotions are reflected in its varying phases and intensified by its seeming sympathy with their hopes and fears, yet we may look almost in vain for examples of that kind of background which participates in the action, and is so truly a part of an organic whole that it cannot be changed without robbing the men and women who move in it of some of their meaning. "Ôtez les falaises de Bretagne à René," said Lamartine, "les savanes du désert à Atala, les Brumes de la Souabe à Werther, les vagues imbibées de soleil et les mornes suants de chaleur à Paul et Virginie, vous ne comprendrez ni Chateaubriand, ni Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, ni Goethe." The criticism is not a new one. Rousseau complained that Richardson's characters had no relation with the world around them, that there was not even a framework in which the memory could

set them, and in his own work he avoided this defect. If we are to make an exception, the most notable in every way is that of the Brontë sisters. Their own temperaments were largely the outcome of a solitary life among the melancholy surroundings of the wolds, and, consciously or unconsciously, they reproduced in the characters which they created the process which had gone to form their own.

But it is time to leave backgrounds in general for that particular form of Nature, infinitely more potent than any other in shaping mankind, infinitely more distinctive in itself, and more engrossing in its attractiveness—the Sea.

A certain indifference to the reality of its influence is no less characteristic of our dealing with this element, which is in some degree our special heritage, the scene on which our manhood has won some of its most glorious triumphs, the highway along which our wealth is borne, which brings the very food to our doors. Our naval history since the days of Elizabeth has been one of almost consistent success: the blood of generations of naval heroes is in our veins; the sea has been our faithful servant and trusted ally, and our view of it is, perhaps, more purely matter of fact than it would be, if the more sombre side of a sea life were brought more vividly before us.

"Nothing passes more quickly off a cheerful mind," says Captain Basil Hall, "than the recollection of adverse winds and bad weather," and if that is the experience of our sailors, it is certainly typical of the attitude of our literature to the subject, for our writers do not think of the sea as the monster which hungers for victims, or as the field from which a life of hardship and peril draws a reluctant harvest, but rather as the fruitful mother of incident, the medium of adventure, the home of a freedom elsewhere unknown, the highway to strange lands, the fairy godmother, to whose good graces a bold heart and a strong hand will win the key.

One of the most brilliant stories of adventure of our generation, "Treasure Island" is a case in point: the sea provides possibilities otherwise unattainable; to the license which is born of it, and is impossible elsewhere, we owe almost the whole of that admirable gallery of portraits, but, after all, the sea itself is only a peg on which to hang dramatic incident; its presence is but dimly felt; it is merely a stage property and has no real part in the action of the piece. The book is a book of adventure, not a book of the sea.

Exactly the same may be said of such a work as "Westward Ho," but what in "Treasure Island" is a simple omission, in "Westward Ho"

is a felt want: the fabled treasure-houses of the West had to be sought over strange and unknown seas; the rough men who swing through these pages must have been torn this way and that by the greed for gold and the superstitious fear of the waste of waters, but for all that the book is almost wholly pitched in one key. The somewhat monotonous bluffness of the adventurers so completely outweighs any suggestions of the terrors which so simple a race must have felt in an intense degree, that the narrative loses picturesqueness at the same time that it misses the truth.

Of Mr. Clark Russell, who has the advantage of a thorough familiarity with his subject, perhaps one may say that, if his work is more sensibly steeped in the veritable brine of the ocean, yet his example only serves to make more clear in how masterful a spirit the Englishman insists on regarding the sea as a mere accessory and not as a subject. Here is a writer whose descriptive work proves him to be both impressionable and imaginative, who realizes somewhat of the strangely personal qualities of the monster on whose broad bosom he has been rocked. "It is in the little open boat," he says, "that one feels the power of the giantess most, you lie close to her heart, you feel the beating of it, your eyes are within arm's-length of the mysteries under her shining breast;

the spirit within you takes measures of the volume and altitude of her respirations," who feels too, how near she will bring you to the heart of things as when he says, "How strange it is to watch the workings of fate: ashore it is an influence, a hidden government, but at sea it is as apparent as a billow, or the rising of a cloud," who is never tired of emphasizing her power over malleable human nature, the strange contrasts she evokes, that child-like innocence which may alternate with the most savage impulses—which will not be wholly absent from any nature of which she has had the nurturing, and yet, with all this, when we get up from reading one of his books it is with a general recollection of a captain and mate truculent even to staginess, of a crew maddened by ill-usage, of doubt and fear, danger and relief, but of the sea, as an agent, and a power, almost nothing. It must be conceded that the effect of a situation is often increased in a highly dramatic way by calling in the aid of the elements, as in the description of the cold and cheerless dawn which ushered in the day following the murder of the first mate in "Marooned." Nor in a latter passage of the same book, could anything be much more effective than the description of the sulky, restless, dirty sea which reflects Lieutenant Musgrave's uneasiness of mind, the jerking and creaking of the ship,

"the groaning of the shrouds and halliards with each giddy, capricious roll of the spars," but Mr. Clark Russell's professional knowledge has a way of betraying him into a profusion of detail which, though it is pleasant reading enough even to those for whom nautical phraseology is shibboleth, detracts from the breadth of his pictures. There is a description of an attempt to reef the sails in a gale of wind in the "Wreck of the Grosvenor," which one cannot but compare with a similar scene in "Mon frère Yves," also from the pen of a professional sailor, but, whereas in the former case the interest of the reader is distracted and his excitement cooled by technicalities which are beyond him, M. Loti, in the latter, writes down to his audience, and, instead of explaining the precise nature of the difficulties to be overcome, gives us a sudden glimpse of the men struggling in a gale of wind with flapping sails and screaming tackle, and wrapped in an icy gloom. None but a sailor could have written the first; no very technical knowledge of the subject was needed by the latter, but it has a vividness which Mr. Clark Russell's narrative lacks: one reads like bookmaking in fact, the other like a genuine impression; "I have never written but when my mind was haunted with a thing," says M. Loti, a profession which is too common among French writers to be accepted un-

reservedly, but borne out, if not by facts, by an art which closely simulates them.

One of the most delightful contributions to the literature of the sea is a paper entitled "Children by the Sea," from the pen of the late Mr. J. R. Green. Here, amid a playful humour, pierces a consciousness of the power which the sea has to fascinate childhood in its fearsomeness as well as in its gaiety: "So charming and yet so terrible, the most playful of playfellows, the most awful of possible destroyers, the child's first consciousness of the greatness and mystery of the world around him is embodied in the sea." As to Robert Browning, so, in a sense, to the child, Nature prefigures, or echoes, human existence: this is the poetry of the sea, but the grown man who in childhood felt it to be the one interest in life, as Mr. Green said, writes of it as veriest prose, and in complete forgetfulness of the spell which it once cast over him.

But if we turn to France, we find ourselves breathing altogether another atmosphere. To us the sea is the scene of fortunate adventure and successful war: to the Frenchman it is, or his literature belies him, the sea of the fisherman—at once the foe and the means of existence. Occasionally we may meet with a reminiscence of Jean Bart or Dugay-Trouin: M. Souvestre may

vaunt the prowess of Charles Cornic for the incredulous Englishman to smile at, or M. Alphonse Karr may wax patriotic over the exploits of the French fishermen who, if he is to be credited, brought an English corvette into Havre under singular circumstances, but the fisherman, and, above all, the fisherman of Brittany, is the burden of their song, for it is with Brittany that we have almost exclusively to deal. If we leave these weather-worn cliffs, it is not to bask in sunlit waters, but to brave death under the cool, grey light of an Icelandic sky, or on the Newfoundland banks. One of the least exclusively French of all French books of the sea is perhaps Sandeau's "Roche aux mouettes," a book for boys of all countries, but it is odd to see how, even here, the fascination which the sea exercises over a child is painted in the sombre colours, which are apparently *de rigueur:* when he is out of sight of it for twenty-four hours he droops and pines, and on his return he is intoxicated with an unnatural delight; the mother is depicted throughout as disputing the possession of her child with the magical attractions of an element which filled her with fear for him. Is it ingratitude, she asks, jealousy, superstition, presentiment? All this seems oddly out of place in a boy's book, but if the attitude of French literature to the sea shows

a more intelligent recognition of its qualities and its powers than does ours, it suffers, on the other hand, from a morbid taint which at times becomes wearisome and unpleasant.

In M. Alphonse Karr we have a genuine devotee, for whom the beach at Ste. Adresse, or, better still, the little boat, was a library not to be surpassed, the sea the volume ever new, in which manhood reads and childhood spells. Who is it, he asks, who, when the sea is before him, can read in any other book, or whose day dreams are of anything but its wonders, of gardens in its stilly depths, and pastures on which strange creatures browse, where the forest is of coral, and the wolf has its counterpart in the shark? Its beauty is as changeful as that of the sky: more material than it, but no less mysterious, it whispers to us a suggestion of infinity. By reason of its vastness, and the bell-like cadence of the surf, by a thousand spells and witcheries it rivets the eye and lulls the brain to stupefaction.

But, for those who live upon it, it speaks of freedom and equality; it is open to the poorest as well as to the most powerful; no keel, were it of richly-chased gold, but its furrow melts away as soon as made; the soil is always virgin, always fertile, and bears on its face no landmark or boundary, except those which want of spirit or

address impose on the individual: the harvest is to him who ventures most—the riches which lie in the depths await their master.

Where Nature speaks into man's ear, as she does during the quiet months within the wooden walls of his floating convent, though the sailor may lack somewhat of the imaginativeness of the man of letters, still something of all this is insensibly absorbed into his nature: when man is brought face to face with so striking an embodiment of the eternal and the immeasurable, to paraphrase M. Loti, with a scene which belongs to no country and to no geological era, it is quite impossible that he should not regain some of that childlike quality of innocence which pierces through the outer crust of appearances to a reality which mere intellect can hardly attain to. This is all true in a high degree of the Breton. The inhabitants of old Armorica—a distinct people, touched, even now, but slightly by the all-levelling spirit of modernism, with their interests centred in the sea are, as M. Renan says, a race of dreamers, who pursue an ideal with unwearying persistency. Their bare uplands and chilly mists forbid anything like Southern passion, but the truth and tenderness of the North are theirs in no small measure. Lovers of their country, no conscript in the French army

remembers his home with the same despairing regret, or so often closes his exile with self-destruction; nor is the mutual love of man and woman less profound among them. "Love," says M. Renan again, "is with them a deep and tender affection," and the Paradise they dream of is fresh and green, and free from the heats of passion; but the same despair which leads them to seek forgetfulness in death, leads also to a species of self-abandonment careless of self-respect, a state which is admirably portrayed in the story of the "Flax-breaker's daughter" in "Souvenirs d'Enfance." With this there is a devotion to religious exercises and a survival of superstition which bathes the country in an atmosphere of mythology, comparable almost to that of a Benares: these exercises, some of which constitute so strange an anachronism in the France of to-day, are nearly all connected with sea-faring life: there you may still see ship-wrecked sailors accomplishing their vows by making the circuit of a chapel on their knees, or taking their way direct from the sea to the altar of the Virgin without a glance of recognition for their nearest and dearest, and carrying with them a piece of the wreck or their sea-stained clothes as a thank-offering. There the baptism of the new boat, the blessing of the fishing fleet, the

celebration of the name-days of the saints are all observed with strange and touching ceremonies; nor does each skipper forget to read a common prayer to God and St. Mary Star of the Sea when the boats have gained the offing. On the side of superstition, we are told that if the newly-launched fishing boat present her stern to the chapel of the Virgin, all contracts to sail on board of her are absolutely cancelled as from that moment. The regard for omens is almost universal, but, as M. Karr says, how should the sailor not turn for protection to a Higher Power, or are his simple and childlike ways of so doing to be regarded with anything but respect? For him the dignities of the earth are of little moment: the political changes, with which the country is now and again rent, leave him almost unmoved; he never looks landward, but his communion is with the sea and with the only power which can curb it; his constant struggle with the inexorable power of the waves teaches him a sublime resignation, just as the prisoner learns a patience, which waits uncomplainingly on events; it is visible in the expression of his face, in which energy is tempered with a certain quality of dreaminess, and in his mute acceptance of things as they are. So distinctly has the sea set its mark on these people that we find an English writer—Miss

Thackeray—treating at least one Breton subject in the French manner; the character of "Reine" in the "Village on the Cliff" is exactly of that serious type, which diversifies years of deep affection with moments of wilfulness, in which the Breton of the sea-coast is cast. To her "the voice of the sea was like a friend," and her gravity was, as Miss Thackeray says, that which is common to people who live by it. To associate with Bretons is to catch something of their temperament or, at least, to realize their understanding of life, but if we wish to find the most sympathetic treatment of the idiosyncrasies of this people, the most complete and striking assertion of the influence of the ocean and the place it fills in their lives, it will be in the pages of one who is a sailor by trade, and a Breton by predilection—M. Pierre Loti. It will be sufficient to take two of his well-known books, one of which deals with the man-of-war's man, and in a measure with seaport life, while the other is devoted, with the exception of a brief interval in Tonkin, to the life of the fisherman and the fishing village: I mean, of course, "Mon frère Yves," and "Pêcheur d'Islande."

M. Loti's work is coloured by a prevailing tinge of sadness: the pearl-grey skies or soaking mists under which the sea lies cold and the landscape

shivers represent, as they are answerable for, the temperaments of his men and women. The subject of "Mon frère Yves," as he tells us in the dedication, is not more the story of a sailor's life than it is a study of what he calls "la grande monotonie de la mer"; and it is true that this very embodiment of all that is changeable, which now rages in a mad Carmagnole, now mirrors the sky on its glassy face, and again sweeps on in the stately cadence of a swell, which passes in a thought from grey to green and from green to blue, is subjectively the very type of all that is monotonous: as the eyes of the sailor are met, wherever he looks, by an expanse of water, so his mind becomes attuned to one strain of thought or day-dream by this enthralling presence.

The innocence or simplicity which characterizes Yves Kermadec, in common with most sailors, is allied, in him, to a savagery, an absence of self-control, a blind yielding to his lower nature, which is strangely animal. We have often read of the effect of the human eye on the wild beast, and the influence of the young officer, who tells the story, over his brother Yves is of the same character. In a moment the impulse to evil melts away under the remonstrance of a stronger nature; the devil is exorcised, and the man rises as from a hideous nightmare or a bed of sickness,

but his character is too completely Breton not to be subject to that kind of despairingness of which M. Renan speaks. As he professes amendment for the future and confidence in his own strength, one is conscious of an undercurrent of foreboding, and an exaggeration in the firmness of his attitude which deceives no one less than himself. On shipboard Yves lives up aloft, alone with his meditations; but when, at the end of the voyage, he is turned adrift in the streets of Brest, with its teeming wine-shops and gross temptations, the sudden revulsion from a life of enforced abstinence and association with the great purity of Nature drives him into wild excess. After his marriage we are introduced to the primitive Breton life of Toulven, with its overgrown lanes and stretches of heath, its weather-beaten church and hamlet. Here the sailor hopes some day to settle, within hail of the sea, and far from the poisoned atmosphere of the great seaport. Whether good or evil will prevail in the end it is left to us to determine for ourselves, but we smile mournfully, as M. Loti does himself, to hear the well-known protestations uttered yet once again, and are fain to echo after him, "One ought to be able to close a life-history at will as one closes a book." It is difficult to put in so many words the *rôle* which the sea and, if we may so term it, the amphibious

Breton coast country plays in this book, but it pervades it as it pervades the people themselves; over the body of Yves the forces of Nature struggle with those of a corrupted civilization. If he has any power to resist temptation, it is because he draws on a fund which has been stored up during the hours passed up aloft, with the sky above and the sea below in unconscious purification.

In "Pêcheur d'Islande" the all-powerful element appears in a more distinctly personal character. The outlines of the story are simple enough. Yann Gaos comes of a family of Iceland fishermen, who, leaving Brittany in the first weeks of the year, and returning to it in September, do but exchange the chill, unwavering light of the northern hemisphere for the mists and gales of a Breton autumn. It so happens that at a marriage feast he meets a certain Marguerite, or Gaud, Mével. Already her name has been suggested to him by those who wish to see him married; but he loves the sea. "One of these days I shall marry," he says, with a touch of scorn, "but no girl of the country. No! the sea will be my bride." This is the key-note of the book; in fact it may be said that the moral struggle between Gaud and the Ocean for Gaos is as much the feature of the book as the physical struggle between Gilliatt and the sea is the feature of

"Travailleurs de la mer," and, indeed, more so. In spite of his pride, however, Gaos has to own himself vanquished by Gaud's charm, while she, for her part, lives from that time for Gaos alone. Her comparative wealth is a barrier between them, and he avoids her rigidly. Meantime she visits the house of his parents on errands which are nothing but a cloke. She loiters in the little churchyard, so eloquent of the hunger of the Northern Sea—that sea which is already the spouse of so many of the Gaos family, "How wrest him," she cries, "from a fate which has claimed so many of his ancestors and brothers?" But fortune is so far kind to her that, in losing her father, she loses her money. In her poverty Gaos is at her feet again, and in veritable earnest; he is due to start for Iceland; meantime they wander along the cliffs above a sea whose calmness seems to bespeak indifference to, if not acquiescence in, their loves. One brief week of married life intervenes. On the evening of the wedding day the foam of the surges is blown up the cliffs, and the winds beat against the hut where they are all assembled for supper. "They are cross out there," says the pilot, "because we are amusing ourselves." "No," said Gaos, smiling at Gaud, "the sea is discontented because I promised her marriage." "The great devourer of sailors was audible out-

side, surging violently, and striking the cliffs with dull blows; one night or another he will be in its clutches, struggling in the midst of a fury of icy blackness. They both knew it." All too soon the day for the departure for Iceland has come. Gaos himself sails in a new boat, the *Léopoldine*, well-found and well-manned. The months pass on and the Iceland ships return; the weeks drag out, and still two are missing. At last, one morning, a sail is sighted on the horizon. The *Léopoldine?* No, alas! the *Marie Jeanne*.

"In the midst of turmoil and fury the marriage of Gaos had been celebrated; the sea, which once was his nurse, which had rocked him on her bosom, had claimed him again."

In this age of rationalization of myths, one hardly looks for the formation of new ones, but that is precisely what M. Loti has done; he has substituted something between a monstrous hunger and a human love for the engrossing power of the sea, and has dowered the blind forces of Nature with a will which it requires little imagination to see in them. It is the old story of the love of a goddess for a mortal: the man has forged his chains on earth and loves them, but they are snapped, and with them the heart of the woman to whom they bound him.

Such has been M. Loti's inspiration, and the world of readers has justified him.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.[1]

WHILE the question of the overcrowding of the living has been gradually claiming a larger measure of public attention, that of the overcrowding of our illustrious dead within the four walls of the Abbey has in like manner been pressing itself with gathering insistence on the minds of the comparatively few whose official position brings home to them the realities of the case.

This is no new difficulty. As long ago as the era of the Commonweath we shall find that it cropped up, though in a less acute form. By that time, as we learn from the evidence of the Dean of Westminster, before the Royal Commission, the want of space "in the parts most traditionally prized," Henry VIIth's Chapel, and the Chapels north and south of the east end, made an overflow into the choir aisles, the north transept, and finally the nave a matter of necessity. Only one monument in the last mentioned part dates from

[1] The question discussed in this article is still unsettled; any point, therefore, which the paper may have had when it was in print three years ago, it has now.

a time prior to the Civil War, and as a matter of fact the nave was probably as little regarded by our ancestors in comparison with the more sacred parts of the church, an alternative hardly less to be reprobated than actual exclusion from the fabric is to us. It is somewhat consolatory to reflect then, as we may, that the difficulty which confronts us had, so far as sentiment goes, almost its exact counterpart two centuries and more ago; our position is actually worse, and is complicated by the absence of any obviously natural solution such as presented itself to our forefathers, but, such as it is, it is not wholly new. The reluctance to use the nave, however strong for the moment, must have been of brief duration, for we find that a hundred years ago d'Holbach—of Rousseau's coterie Holbachique—who is quoted by Dean Stanley, speaks of the people in the streets of London as not more crowded "than are the funeral monuments in the Abbey."

It is idle to lament the waste of valuable space which our ancestors did so little to discountenance, the preposterous size and unfortunate placing of many of the monuments, the slender claims of some of the men and women whose mediocrity alone they perpetuate. It is worse than idle to sneer at a custom sanctioned now by the usage of centuries, extended to no mere pri-

vileged class, as has been asserted, a custom which, whether actually provocative of great actions or not—and we know that Blake's burial in the Abbey was intended as an incentive to heroic achievements—has been present to the minds of many at the moment of death, and is recognized by an overwhelming majority of the nation as the fitting crown for its noblest and most fruitful lives. To hint at its possible discontinuance is to confess the decadence of our manhood, or to make an assumption of a merit which transcends the material memorial. The actual abnegation would be as unreasonable as the claim unwarrantable, and any serious consideration of such a solution of the question, if it can be so termed, is quite unnecessary.

The evidence collected by the Commissioners has now been before us for some time: an inquiry conducted by experts, a feature in such a case as new as it is welcome, has resulted in the collection of a body of evidence, manageable in quantity, and as interesting as it is intelligible in its matter, which is sufficient without the report of the Commissioners themselves to show us precisely what courses are open to us for choice, and the reasons which must govern us in our selection.

Broadly speaking, we have, in the first instance,

two alternatives put before us—both of them of necessity leaving something to be desired—the first of which is represented by the provision of some entirely new place of rest for those whom the nation delights to honour, whether in direct connection with the Abbey or not. This is the positive course, and the second consists in accepting what we have to our hands, using the Abbey for actual sepultures so long as it will admit of it, placing the memorials, much restricted in size and confined to tablets of some form or other, on the walls of the cloisters or any other position of similar importance which might present itself, and leaving the settlement of the question in fine, a settlement which must be grappled with some day or other, to posterity.

The actual position is as follows. As regards interments, it was elicited from the Clerk of Works by one of the Commissioners who devoted himself with great perseverance to the discovery of the utmost limits of the Abbey's capacity, that there is still room for at least ninety more. Throughout the last century, though some rigour was exercised in the matter of monuments, the burial of a number of inconsiderable persons was unfortunately permitted. The opening of a new century saw a somewhat more jealous supervision, and latterly, the privilege has come to be regarded

by the authorities as one to be granted with so much circumspection that the Abbey may be expected at the present rate—about one in every two years—to hold out for nearly two centuries longer. There is breathing space here, but unfortunately mere interment without visible memorial does not meet the case, and it is in this connection that the need for immediate relief is at once apparent. The number of monuments erected is considerably in excess of the burials, being, on an average, three in two years, or thrice as many, and at the present moment there is actually no vacant space unless it be for a bust clinging like some uncouth growth to a column or a medallion set in a solemn and unvarying shade. Indeed, so long ago as 1881, when it fell to Dean Stanley, and the then First Commissioner, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, to select a position for the intended statue of Lord Beaconsfield, it was found that there were only two possible places for the memorial of a man of such eminence. The statue in question occupies one, when the other is filled we shall witness the completion of the last cadre of an army unparalleled in the world's records.

To say there is no room for memorials while there is room for interments cannot, of course, be strictly true, because the flat stone which covers the grave may always carry a brass, or a marble

slab incised or carved in low relief, and there is still a large range of windows which might, under fitting restraints, be filled with memorial glass, but, after all, these tell their story but in a lame way, and cannot be considered even passable substitutes for the forms which almost universally prevail. Finally, and this has been mooted more than once, and indeed acted on, but with fortunate tentativeness, some temporary relief might no doubt be obtained by shifting here and paring there, by putting the insignificant away in the remoter corners and stripping them of their excrescences or their projections. This, however, is a course which it is difficult to reprobate too strongly. If the tablet or monument has not an indefeasible right to the position it occupies; if holding it once, it does not hold it for good—then half the value and half the sentiment, and, as Sir Frederick Leighton said with great justice, at least a part of the architectural merit is absolutely blotted out. So-and-so has no representatives—Wolfe for example; such and such a family has died out, it has been said with an unmistakable reference to the resulting possibilities: well, even in a country church such a reason for the semi-obliteration of the memory of some local tradesman is a cruel one, but in such a case as this where, as we know, the tombs have in many cases

been arrayed with an affecting regard for the congruity and propriety of their surroundings,[1] where friend has been placed so that he can see friend, ally and ally side by side, such a proposal is almost an outrage, and comes ill from those who are asking in the same breath for a building in intimate connection with the Abbey, so that there may be no break of continuity. What a contradiction is here! and how strange a confusion of thought when it is even proposed, as has been done in all gravity, that some of the memorials of the more eminent men should be moved at once into the new annexe, to take off the smell of fresh paint, as it were, to act as warming-pans, as tame elephants, as decoy ducks, or whatever one may choose to call them. No! rather let us have an abrupt severance, a simple cleavage, than the brushing away of a cobweb which associations have hallowed, the breaking of a link in the chain of historical sequence: we have our museums

[1] Thus, taking only more recent years, Charles Dickens was buried close to the bust of Thackeray; Lord Lytton, as the author of "The Last of the Barons," by the side of a warrior who fell at Barnet; Lord Lawrence was buried near Sir James Outram and Lord Clyde; Sir Charles Lyell "at the foot of the monument of Woodward, the first founder of English geology"; Bishop Thirlwall near George Grote, and Mr. Spottiswoode near Archbishop Spottiswoode, the historian of the Scottish Church.

elsewhere, let us beware of adding another to the number!

So much for the sentimental side of a suggestion for which architectural advantages have also been claimed by its admirers. It is perfectly true, and the simple fact is patent beyond denial, that the architecture is in some measure masked by works which are very often quite out of keeping with it, and in many cases touched with a sickly sentimentalism which is jarring enough, but they have at least the advantage of preserving what they do somewhat to hide, a point of which the architectural purist is somewhat oblivious, and the broad and solemn background actually gains in dignity from the fanciful fretwork which plays about it. Moreover, once begin to move structures for which, in many instances, arcades have been blocked up, string courses cut short, and wall spaces tampered with, and it will be found that a very large amount of new stonework will be necessary. So far the interior is in happy contrast to the outside, no old church, in fact, preserves more completely the warm and sombre colouring which time only gives; to break this up with spots and stripes of new stonework would be destructive to the rich harmony which now forms so large a part of the great church's charm, the sacrifice of a reality for an idea.

It has been incidentally mentioned that the great cloisters have been suggested as offering the easiest and most natural solution of the question. There is a good deal to be said for this view, and Mr. Knowles, who is responsible for it, put the case strongly in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*. The Cloisters, as we are told, are a central part of the old Abbey precincts; they are approached directly from the south aisle at two points, and, what is a happy feature in the case, and does a good deal to break the abruptness of the transition from inside to outside, the northern half of the east walk is actually an integral part of the main fabric, being, in point of fact, nothing else than the western aisle of the south transept. The Cloisters themselves are of noble size, and, as Mr. Knowles was able to show, offer an amount of wall-space which it would take a long time to fill. That they are somewhat squalid now is unfortunate for the attractiveness of the suggestion, but a little restoration carefully applied, and the glazing of the openings—an indispensable precaution—would do all that is needful to fit them for their new use. So much in their favour: objections, however, suggest themselves at once. The first is that the Cloisters are an open thoroughfare, though comparatively little importance need be attached to this; and the second is that, while the

wall-space may be adequate enough, there is no floor-space at all, and floor-space is quite a *sine quâ non* for all but tablets and medallions of modest dimensions. To confine the memorials to the Cloisters would be in fact equivalent to the passing of a sumptuary law to restrict their form and size, and the architectural effect of such a result would be monotonous and wearisome to a degree.

There is one other point on which Mr. Knowles laid a good deal of stress, and with great show of reason, viz., the propriety of utilizing the garth for burials. Such a course would be most natural, and indeed it appears on the testimony of the clerk of works, that, as might have been anticipated, it commended itself as such to our ancestors some six hundred years ago, the ground being so full of remains as to preclude any further use of it. The advantages which the cloisters offer are, it would seem, of no very real kind. There was some talk at one of the sittings of the Commission of first and second class interments. The phrase is distressingly suggestive of Bumbledom, but if anything of the sort did commend itself, though, where the process of selection is so severe distinctions would be very invidious, the cloisters might be made use of. It is probable, however, that a reference was made to existing

monuments: to move them to the cloisters would be just as objectionable as moving them to a new building, and it is hardly likely that the Commissioners would ever make such a recommendation.

Before passing to the suggestions now actually before us, it is worth while to notice briefly some earlier proposals of which they are the successors and the outcome. The first to be regularly formulated, though Sir Charles Barry appears to have made drawings of a cloister, was that of Sir Gilbert Scott. The scheme was a large one, including a "Campo Santo" so-called, and a memorial chapel on the Abingdon Street front, opposite the Victoria Tower, which was to be approached by a long passage way passing under the buttresses of the Chapter House and then turning South. The mere clearing of the site would have cost some 200,000*l.*, and a structure of such extreme length and moderate height would have offered a very difficult problem for architectural treatment. This scheme, however held the field till Mr. James Fergusson, after considerable correspondence with Mr. Shaw Lefevre, published a plan for a new "Transept." This Transept was to have been a great Hall, similarly approached round the Chapter House, running directly South from that building, and extending

as far as the College garden. If built as Mr. Fergusson intended it, it would have "provided space for monuments very much larger than the existing Nave of the Abbey," a provision of quite unnecessary magnitude, and the building itself, which was to have been wider than the Abbey Nave, and covered with a roof of flat pitch, could hardly have missed being unwieldy in itself, besides acting prejudicially on its magnificent neighbour, crushing the Chapter House, and greatly dwarfing Henry VIIth's Chapel.

The hand of Mr. Shaw Lefevre was apparent in this plan: his interest in the Abbey is of long standing, and he has devoted considerable time and labour to studying the subject and writing upon it. Tired, however, of a course which possibly seemed too negative, and oblivious of certain well-meant attempts during an ambitious tenure of the Ædileship which the public has the bad taste to hold in small esteem, he was moved by the approach of the Queen's jubilee to broach a project for a Victoria Chapel, to be built close to the Abbey, on a par with it in dignity, or, to use his own words, "quite as much so as Henry VIIth's Chapel," and devoted to monuments of the great men of the Victorian era. The clearance thus effected in the church itself was to have been followed by a general shifting of the

other monuments—a sort of Mad tea-party on a large scale—a course to which Mr. Shaw Lefevre seems to have been moved by the enjoyment which the clearing away of the old Law Courts from Westminster Hall afforded him. Much grievous work has been done in the name of the Jubilee, but had the Victoria Chapel been carried out in all its completeness, we should have had an achievement quite peerless in its undesirability. What would have happened had not the Imperial Institute justified its existence at that early stage in its existence by blocking the way, it is dreadful to contemplate. Mr. Lefevre has evidently not lost his liking for his project, but the general tone which pervaded the proceedings of the Commission leaves little room for fear in the future.

We now find ourselves face to face with the proposals on which the Commission has actually reported, and, for convenience sake, we may regard them as divided into (i.) buildings in close connection (real, or supposed) with the Abbey, and (ii.) those not in direct communication, and as subdivided into (i.) those which provide permanent and (ii.) those which give only temporary relief. It will be better in the first instance to deal with those for which their authors claim direct connection with the main building, a claim

which is actually made in every case but one, and finally to consider that single example.

Mr. Pearson has no less than five schemes, though one of them is so slight a modification of another that the two may be taken together, on all of which he was examined at length by the Commission. The largest of these projects, and that which differs less materially than the others from those already noticed, reproduces the now familiar feature of a covered passage from Poet's Corner under the Chapter House buttresses, but the memorial chapel itself is on a reasonable scale, and, as it takes the form of a Nave with double aisles on either side, the highest part though but little south of the centre of the Chapter House would allow of a good view of that building being obtained from the N.E. A second plan, showing the whole structure moved twenty-five feet southwards, would, of course, be proportionately better in that respect. The east end of the Chapel is shown projecting slightly farther eastwards than Henry VIIth's Chapel, and, while otherwise creating no interference, would altogether mask the Chapter House from the south-east.

The second scheme is an entirely new departure, being nothing less than a proposal to add a new North Aisle running from the North Transept almost the whole length of the existing aisle of

the Nave, and entered directly from it and from the Transept. The third plan also occupies the Abbey Green, but takes the form of a "double cloister, glazed on both sides, enclosing a garth with approaches to the Abbey similar to those in the previous scheme." This plan is not much favoured by its author, and, as a matter of fact, the building of a new cloister, however conveniently planned for its particular purpose, while one already exists, is a proposal which hardly needs combating.

On somewhat the same lines as Mr. Pearson's first scheme is one which is jointly promoted by Messrs. Lawrence Harvey and J. P. Seddon, the main differences being that the entrance in this case would be from the south end of the East walk of the Cloisters instead of from the Abbey, that the Chapel would extend right out to Abingdon Street instead of only to the Palace Yard frontage, and that it would be a great deal more expensive—some 400,000*l.* in all.

It is something of a relief to pass from so large a project as this to the modest proposals of Mr. R. H. Carpenter and Mr. Tarver, who have both, since then, been lost to their profession and their friends, the plan of the former consisting of a small addition in the angle formed by the North Transept and the North Aisle of the Nave, and

that of the latter of "a wreath of chapels" round the Chapter House. Now there is an initial objection to such a scheme as that of Mr. Tarver —and Mr. Carpenter's is only somewhat better in this respect—that a little series of Columbaria —if we may so call them, and who knows what the womb of time may bring forth?—which obviously lack the monumental and dignified character that the purpose demands, is quite unsuited for the reception of anything of the first importance, and would not give relief of a permanent kind. Moreover, a scheme which is hardly more than a makeshift sets a bad precedent, and the very existence of such an addition as is proposed would suggest the erection of some similar little chapels or chambers whenever these should be exhausted. It has the further disadvantage—and this Mr. Pearson's first scheme shares with it—of obscuring the outline of the Chapter House, altering an original and characteristic design, and embodying the buttresses in the building in just the same way as has been done, with or without justification, at Westminster Hall.

All the plans for the erection of a building to the south-east of the Abbey would tend to clog up and hide the Chapter House; they would either vie with the Abbey or look insignificant by the

side of it, and would entail a large outlay in the clearance of the ground to the south-east of the Chapter House only to cumber it again. Nothing is more irritating, more productive of lasting discontent than to see a building in all its beauty for a season, only to lose it again; such was our experience a few years ago with St. George's, Bloomsbury, thrown open for a few months, and then again hermetically sealed, and with a very ill-looking stopper. If a church of comparatively slight interest is to be regretted, how much more would the varied and charming group in question, once disclosed, cry aloud for lasting freedom? Let a clearance be made by all means, if the funds admit of it—two houses on the Old Palace Yard front and three behind would be almost sufficient—but let there be no doubt about the permanence of the improvement.

The new North Aisle, while free from the objections mentioned above, and certainly not wanting in special advantages of its own, is too bold an experiment to be tried unless one is quite sure that there is justification for it, or, indeed, no possible loop-hole of escape from it. The connection with the Abbey would be direct; that is a feature which commends itself at once, but if the connection is merely to be by a door or doors, the aisle would practically be, as one of the

members of the Commission said, "the next room:" that is, as M. d'Argenton would have said, a "mot cruel," but it conveys very clearly the nature of the bulwark which exists in that great aisle wall. Does so discrete a connection, we are bound to ask ourselves, constitute a sufficient cause for tampering with the integrity of a great historical monument? Our Abbey Church is so richly dowered with associations: it is to so many of us what it was to Voltaire, the "Temple Consacré a la Mémoire," that we are perhaps liable to overlook its merits as a piece of architecture, and yet it is a quite unique building in this country; and though, as Mr. Pearson says, the nave is modernized and debased outside, yet the whole design does here stand practically confessed, here on the Abbey Green, and nowhere else. There may be possibilities of beauty in a work which may have escaped the author. It may be true that Chopin said of a rendering of a work of his own, "That is not what I meant, but I like it better," but it is for the creator to say so.

It is quite possible that the new aisle might prove no eyesore, even the reverse; but we must not run the risk unless the benefits which are to accrue are something more real than those which Mr. Pearson holds out. Again, the question of style, one of the greatest importance, is beset with

difficulties. It is becoming an old story now, the cry for a new style of our own which cannot be manufactured and will not grow. For six thousand years, as Victor Hugo says in that strange and fanciful chapter in "Notre Dame," architecture was the book in which the thoughts of the whole human race were inscribed. Therein were recorded not only the various manifestations of religious feeling, but, in the very portals of the church, may be read the protest of the worldling or the reactionary. Where one building preached an ancient faith, a love of order and stable government, another—and Victor Hugo names St. Jacques de la Boucherie as an instance—was, so to speak, the organ of the opposition. The durable book of architecture has been killed by the still more lasting product of the printing press. We are no longer articulate in stone and marble; it is not the vehicle for the expression of our thoughts which is natural to us, and in the consequent want of inspiration our choice has to be made deliberately and in cold blood. What then is to be our model? Mr. Pearson's own idea is to show that the addition is of later date than the church proper by the simple adoption of a later style. Now to copy exactly may be to run the risk of falsifying the history of the fabric, but designedly to adopt some special development of

a later period is somewhat like going out of the way to make falsification falser, and the presence of Henry VIIth's chapter, a veritably late growth, makes the question all the more thorny. At this point, fortunately, we are met by a suggestion which appeared in the pages of a well-known architectural journal,[1] bolder indeed than that which we have been considering, but far more fruitful in advantages. The writer proposes that an aisle should be built in the precise position adopted by Mr. Pearson, that a gabled roof should take the place of the lean-to form adopted by that gentleman, and that the whole of the glass should be taken out of the existing two-light windows, so far as the new aisle might extend, and be moved bodily into a series of openings of precisely similar outline in the new north wall. The effect of such a proceeding would be that the unglazed windows would form a great open arcade, giving an exceedingly picturesque view into the new aisle, and the connection between the new work and the old would be of the closest possible kind. Further, the general question of style would have been settled by the necessity for accommodating existing memorial glass, while a few modern touches, as the writer in the *Builder* suggests, might be trusted to give the necessary

[1] *The Builder*, December 27th, 1890.

hint to the archæologist of the future. Such an addition as this would, it is almost needless to say, have ample precedent in old work, and it is enough to point to the north-west and south-west chapels at Lincoln Minster as a case in point.

Such then being the possibilities in the way of direct connection, it remains to notice the scheme already alluded to as standing alone in the category of the professedly disconnected, a scheme which, introduced late in the day and with no great fanfare of trumpets, still boasts an obvious propriety which appeared to be generally recognized before the Committee closed its sittings.

A glance at the ground plan of the Abbey precincts will show us that the south wall of the Cloisters forms the northern boundary of a strip of ground running nearly the whole length of the Cloister walk, the site of the old Refectory, and still unoccupied except for some buildings of quite trivial character at one end. This piece of land, which is bounded on the southern side by Ashburnham House, is apparently still the property of the Dean and Chapter, and theirs to deal with if they so decide, seeing that no consideration whatever was given for it at the time that Ashburnham House was itself handed over to the governing body of Westminster School. This then is the subject of the last and perhaps the

most satisfactory of Mr. Pearson's proposals. Now, it has been claimed by the partisans of each of the remaining sites that they admit of a direct connection with the Abbey. Nothing of the sort is urged in favour of the one under notice; the intimate connection of a new North Aisle is of course admitted, but with what show of reason can direct connection be claimed for any of those buildings which have to be approached through corridors and chambers, or in what respect is the noble and ancient Cloister walk a less fitting approach to the new building? Is it because it is open to wind and rain? That is easily remedied. Is it because it is a passage way—an entrance to the Abbey? That has actually been claimed for the other sites as a good feature. Is the opposition to the Cloister consequent on the squalid condition into which it has been allowed to fall? Then a reason for putting it into proper repair should be welcomed rather than put aside.

What are the actual facts of the case?

The Refectory site may be reached directly down either the east or west walks of the Cloister, the distance from door to door being little more than a hundred and fifty feet. None of the proposed chapels are nearer than this, except Mr. Tarver's "Wreath," and some are more distant.

The available dimensions are ample, the lowest estimate being one hundred and thirty feet by thirty-seven feet, and the cost is put at 30,000*l.* Nothing providing the same amount of accommodation could be cheaper, and as a matter of fact, Mr. Pearson himself estimates his Palace Yard chapel at twice the amount. Far from being conspicuous, and that surely is not desirable, a building in this position would hardly make its presence felt, and being raised on the old lines, would group harmoniously with the existing units of an architectural whole. This reticence, if we may so term it, is a point on which some stress should be laid. It is probable that most of us regret a good deal that was done in the early days of revived Church restoration; the feeling of respect for old work has grown and is growing, almost in spite of the attitude adopted by some of its advocates; what it may be two or three centuries hence it is impossible to forecast, but the chances are that posterity will not bless us if we put a rash hand on the Abbey itself. What would be our own feelings if our great grandfathers had done what we lightly speak of doing, or is there any reason to suppose that indiscreet action on our part would be less resented by those who follow us than is the vandalism of the early years of the century by ourselves?

All that remains of the Refectory is the north wall for a height of some thirty feet, and a much-decayed piece of arcading at the east end. The north wall, which contains a Norman arcade below and a range of blocked-up two-light fifteenth century windows above, is still in a condition to be preserved, though rapidly decaying, and would necessarily give the key-note to the whole design. The new building could not pretend to be a restoration, but, at any rate, we know what the old windows were, and the mere fact of covering in the open space would preserve features of old work which are otherwise doomed to gradual extinction.

Nearly all the designs show the chapels composed of a central portion and at least two aisles. What the intention of such an arrangement may be is not quite clear, and an almost unbroken hall with but shallow recesses, such as the Refectory would present, will commend itself to most as being better suited for the particular purpose, and decidedly more economical of space. Mr. Pearson himself seems to favour the North Aisle, but, if he does so, he has put a two-edged sword into the hands of its opponents by showing in a slight sketch an admirable treatment of the building on the Refectory site—a treatment which is unusual, picturesque without being undignified, and justified, or rather necessitated, by structural diffi-

culties. No more need be said; the settlement of the question lies on the knees of the gods, or of the members of the Commission. Give us, however, a new Refectory, restored for another and higher purpose than that which its founders contemplated; give us a Chapter House freed from accretions the squalor of which can hardly be matched in the neighbourhood of any other great church, and we shall say that the common altar of Use and Beauty has been crowned with an acceptable offering, on which the fire from heaven will not be called down in vain.[1]

[1] Mr. Yates-Thompson's recent offer (Feb. '94) to provide the funds for the erection of a memorial chapel on the Palace Yard site has again brought this question into prominence. Had his view coincided with that which is expressed in this paper, the appeal to Government to present him with a site, which it will cost a good deal to clear, would have been unnecessary, and the possibility of injuring the effect of the Abbey would have been avoided.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

"THE three greatest egotists that we know of," said Hazlitt, "that is, the three writers who felt their own being most powerfully and exclusively, are Rousseau, Wordsworth, and Benvenuto Cellini. As Swift somewhere says, we defy the world to furnish a fourth." One has a malicious inclination to pick up Hazlitt's glove, and proceed to give proof of his own claims to fill the empty pedestal. But, after all, he was no egotist, if that word is to carry anything invidious with it. No one was ever less like that easy philosopher whom Rousseau describes lying unconcernedly in bed while dynasties crash in ruin. In the larger movements of life, at least, unselfishness was one of the laws of his being, but the quality of his humanity, the very fervour of his social and political sympathies, were accountable for a large degree of self-engrossment.

He was a rule to himself, the touchstone by which mankind was tested, the common measure of all that came within his ken, the final court

from which there was no appeal. When we read Byron, to use his words, the writer is never absent from our minds; and when we read Hazlitt the shadow of his personality is always on the page. We might condone the obtrusion of an individuality less interesting with an excuse so complete as his; we do more than condone, we welcome the unconscious delineation of a character so singularly and so richly endowed. Everything tended to drive him in upon himself. As a young man his natural shyness was extreme, and his command of language quite inadequate to the expression of his thoughts. If with these drawbacks—and he was painfully conscious of them—he launched his boat on the sea of controversy, it was because the strength of his convictions did not allow him to remain silent. He did not expect, he could not have expected, sympathy; but the bitterness of the hostility which he evoked made him more than ever conscious of an isolation both in temperament and tone of thought.

He cast the seed of bitter criticism on the waters, and reaped a copious harvest. What sort of persecution he was subjected to it is difficult to realize now, but his letter to Gifford is his succinct answer to volumes of invective which seem as if hey had been penned with vitriol.

Had Hazlitt been a man of weaker fibre, the

influence of the small and intellectual circle to which he belonged might have contributed to his somewhat ostentatious assertion of independence. We do not need the glimpses which his papers give us of it to understand that the atmosphere was of a nature to foster the germs of conceit. There is just a trace of the mutual admiration which is the bane of the small and superior coterie, but there is no conceit in Hazlitt, not even when he instances his own sufferings in illustration of the disadvantages of intellectual superiority. He merely draws on his own experience, and weaves the woof of general application on the warp of his individual sensations in the way that was habitual to him. He postulates the particular quality, as he might have postulated a less desirable one, for the purposes of his argument, and with no more emotion than if it were a mathematical truth.

If this is conceit, it is not the conceit of the individual, but that of the class, the counterpart of that feeling which used to be the birthright of every Englishman—pardonable because unconscious and unexpressed—but all the more irritating to others for that very reason. Something of this Hazlitt may have felt and regretted in later life. "It was my misfortune (perhaps)," he writes in the letter to his son on the Conduct of Life, "to be bred up among Dissenters, who look with

too jaundiced an eye at others, and set too high a value on their own particular pretensions. . . . They reduce all integrity and soundness of opinion within the pale of their own little communion." There are natures so constituted as never to be happy unless they are in the minority, for whom the flowing of the tide of public opinion is coincident with the ebb of the slender stream of prejudice which they call their own. By bringing up, by disposition, by a certain perverse leaning to paradox, which he laughingly admits himself, in a word, by every gift of nature and accident of circumstances, Hazlitt belonged to this little band.

His first appearance in public was not among the least characteristic. Religious liberty was his subject, the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* the medium of his outpourings; and the letter itself, both in style and matter—both of which were astonishingly mature for a boy of thirteen—not unprophetic of the future of its writer. In his case the boy was, in the fullest sense, the father of the man. Those long musings over the teacup in the little inn-parlour, the solitary walks on the uplands of Winterslow, that chewing of the cud of fancy in which the grown man delighted, were, as they were foreshadowed in youthful preoccupation, at once the wonder and the bane of his teachers.

From the broad track of theology mapped out before him he strayed, musingly but wilfully, into the byways of philosophy or jurisprudence; for the school themes, which he condemned as "rather disserviceable than otherwise," he substituted essays on subjects of his own choosing. Remonstrance was in vain—either the culprit was impenitent or was unequal to resisting the temptation; at any rate, he did not reform.

All this could only have one end. The hope of the father's life had been to see his son in the Unitarian ministry, but he recognized now that he could not look to see it fulfilled. The days at the training college were cut short, and the visionary came home to spend the next few years in a way which disheartened his friends, but with results in the end which showed that they had not been wasted. It was a season of ice-bound unproductiveness till the meeting with Coleridge excited him to a spasm of activity, but it was the prelude to the bursting of the waters, and a lasting springtime bright with the flowers of thought and fancy. Those long, uncommunicative years, when thoughts were not put into words, and the key was turned in the rusty lock of speech, were answerable for much of the diffidence and savagery which put Hazlitt on bad terms with London society. Coleridge's talk had indeed kindled a

fire in his listener, and the great man himself was not slow to recognize a congenial intellect looking out of his disciple's eyes; but this was only a brief interlude, an oasis in a desert to all appearance. Want of words and slovenliness of dress made him even a subject of ridicule when he presented himself in London drawing-rooms, a treatment which he took to heart, if he did not go out of his way to make it unreasonable. "As for dress and address," he says, in later years, "these are the small coin in the intercourse of life which are continually in request. Inattention to our own person implies disrespect to others." As Sarah Churchill said in "Belinda," "After all, the sublimer virtues are the thousand-pound notes that one seldom needs to change, and granny has plenty of the sixpences." This small change was just what Hazlitt never had; and the stories told by Haydon of the Hazlitt *ménage* in the married days—of a christening party with Mrs. Hazlitt in *déshabille*, Hazlitt out, the fire in the same condition, nothing ordered, much less prepared—show that he regarded the possession of these small passports to popularity purely as an aspiration of perfection. He gazed at it from his Pisgah, and remained as true to his untidiness as he was consistent in everything else. The first person to see anything in him, as he himself seems to have told Mary Lamb,

was Crabb Robinson. The latter, in his diary, tells us that he put a conundrum to his sister-in-law, the answer to which was to become a gratifying testimony to his clear-sightedness. "Whom do you suppose I hold to be the cleverest person I know?" "Capel Loft, perhaps." "No." "Mrs. Clarkson." "Oh, no." "Miss Maling." "No." "I give it up." "William Hazlitt." "Oh, you are joking. Why, we all take him to be just the reverse." This was in 1799, the year after the meeting with Coleridge at Wem. Hazlitt's subsequent criticism of Wordsworth—a species of impiety in Crabb Robinson's eyes—made them complete strangers, but each continued to have a regard for the other, one as having been once the object, the other the subject, of the verb "appreciate."

In his relation with the other sex Hazlitt was at his worst, nor is there anything in his writings less to the point, very little less kindly than the few pages which he devoted to woman, and the way to win her favour. It was a pity that he had ever had the chance of showing his want of comprehension in a more practical way. If he did not succeed with men at large it was for other reasons. Could Dr. Johnson's opinion have been taken, even with Hazlitt's appreciative references to him under his eyes, it is to be feared he never could have been

brought to call him clubbable. He took life too seriously; he refused too strenuously to regard a man apart from his opinions; he was too severe on his weaker-kneed brethren; the bodies of his dead friendships were too often met on their way to burial to make the adventure of his intimacy tempting even to those who were well-disposed to it. The outspokenness of the candid friend was his. Martin Burney was his associate and his host till he felt called upon to express himself in scathing terms on Madame d'Arblay's work, on her brother's hearthrug, and in his presence; thenceforward the house knew him no more. Lamb's sweet nature only prevented a permanent rupture in that quarter. He turned on Wordsworth, and taunted him with accepting the post of Poet Laureate to a Court he had reviled and insulted—with truckling for place and pension, and prostituting his Muse in the Royal service. He attacked Coleridge with a ferocity born perhaps of sorrow rather than anger; he lamented over the fallen angel, while he lashed the weak human being. "Such an article," said Lamb, "is like saluting a man, 'Sir, you are the greatest man I ever saw,' and then pulling him by the nose." "But oh thou!" the distracted worshipper apostrophizes the former object of his cult, "who didst lend me speech when I was dumb, wake thou out

of thy mid-day slumbers! shake off the heavy honeydew of thy soul!"

If even Wordsworth and Coleridge could find it in their hearts to desert the principles which he had been proud to share with them, what firm footing was there left for him? The "*corruptio optimi pessima*" stung him beyond bearing. He had been no profound believer in human nature before, he was too sane to become a misanthrope now, but he would have thought it blindness not to see self-interest at the root of most actions; opinion, for the future, is only a battle in which the motive is a share in the spoil, the prospects of victory the most powerful influence. Even in those who do "adhere to a prescribed opinion" his keen scent discovers sullenness rather than fortitude.

It is common enough to find that thumb-nail sketches which have no motive beyond the humour of the moment convey a truer impression of their subject than the set picture, and incidental, unreasoned suggestions of character than the elaborate portrait study.

Haydon, as autobiographer, would not have been himself if he had regarded his book as a medium for the portraiture of his friends, or had put their figures in to the same colossal scale as that of the protagonist. His own picture suffers from the

exaggeration which marked all his work, but the quickness and truth of apprehension, which rarely failed him except when he was immediately concerned, were accountable for some very life-like portraits of the members of his circle. Among these was Hazlitt, for whom in many of his moods the painter had a strong appreciation. His own innate Toryism, buffeted by ill-success and unpopularity, would have become hopelessly waterlogged had his nature been less buoyant. His recuperative powers were great, but disappointment left its mark, and his mood was often in close accord with that which was habitual to Hazlitt; but through all this, and through his half-humorous resort to the head-centre of dissatisfaction when things were going worse than usual with him, pierces the consciousness—visible enough in scattered passages—that so settled an attitude of contradictoriness was only tolerable because, as Teufelsdröckh might have expressed it, it was the garment the man wore, and not the man himself. Hazlitt's view of life was perhaps the natural outcome of his experiences, but Crabb Robinson brings a heavy indictment against him when he says that Wicksteed, the Unitarian minister at Leeds, was the only home acquaintance whom he ever heard him warmly praise.

But after all gossip has a way of belittling its

subject matter, and Hazlitt the man is best studied first hand, as he is portrayed by Hazlitt the writer. Nowhere shall we get so correct or so vivid an impression of him. Indeed, if the circumstances of his life and character were unknown, and we had nothing for it but to construct the man from the internal evidence of his writings, as Bagehot did in the case of Shakspeare, the result could hardly fail to be a very good likeness of the original as we know him, a figure somewhat softer of outline may be, and not less true for that.

In this connection nothing is more instructive than the letter to his son already mentioned. This is practically an epitome of his philosophy of life, written when his vein was calm, dispassionate, retrospective, and even regretful. It breathes the same spirit of remorse as do his friend Haydon's maxims for his stepson Simon, "Never borrow money—it is degrading. Never lend, if by lending you render yourself unable to pay what you owe; but under any circumstances never borrow." Here are all the pitfalls into which he has fallen, or gone near to falling, each with its own danger-signal. Here is the inculcation of the virtues which were so peculiarly his own, but purged of their excess, his scorn of lying, of truckling, of dissembling, his love for

liberty, his strength of conviction and steadfastness of purpose; but we are not to run away with the notion "that the rich are all knaves, or that the Lords are fools," we are not to pose as possessing all the talents; we are neither to be argumentative nor brawlers; firm friends, but circumspect in the beginnings of friendship, and not foolishly dependent on its lasting for ever, nor clinging to the shadow, when the substance has passed away—preferring, in a word, to bury its carcase rather than embalm it.

A curious interlude in Hazlitt's life was his brief apprenticeship to the art of painting. An impatience, which prompted him to slash his canvas into ribbons if he was dissatisfied with it, was perhaps among the motives which led him to seek some means of livelihood less open to such sudden and hopeless obliteration. A few months in his brother's studio, a few more in the Louvre, and yet again a few spent portrait-painting in different country places, was all that was seriously and entirely devoted to it.

But, if it was an interlude as an actual study, painting was, for the future, to occupy a considerable place in his life as a source of pleasure and as food for his pen; while the frequency with which he reverts to it for purposes of illustration shows how constantly it was in his mind.

The painter's life was to him an ideal one, far removed from all the petty bickerings and little interests of the moment—"There is a kind of immortality about this sort of visionary existence that dallies with fate, and baffles the green monster death," and among painters, Northcote, "whose body was a shadow, who was himself a pure spirit," the most enviable. Given a fair prospect of success, and no life seemed to him so worthy to be chosen. Hazlitt's art criticism is difficult to judge by any modern standard; his ways were not those of to-day. He was of the stuff of which art critics are generally supposed to be made—he had wooed art and had not won her; he had failed on the constructive side, and had turned, in the usual way, to the destructive, but never, with the possible exception of his contribution to the new Encyclopædia Britannica, did he write with any appearance of technical knowledge. It is not that the painter is merged in the literary man, it is not even that he wanders off into disquisitions like About, and makes a portrait an excuse for a criticism of its subject, or, like Diderot, passes from digression to digression, perfecting with every touch the portrait of his own personality, but it is that the whole point of view is just what one would have said a painter's would not have been. The work may be ap-

proached in its purely moral aspect or in its intellectual, but as a work of art, many-sided and dependent on no one quality to the exclusion of others, never. Painting is criticized simply and solely for the ideas it conveys, never for itself; it is not only that there is a complete absence of the art critic's jargon, that is, of course, of recent growth, but there is just as complete an absence of all the ideas which that jargon has only crystallized and defined. With all our respect for the great names which we honour far more highly now than Hazlitt honoured them then, art, one must say it, was markedly conventional in his day. It was the day of Wilson, for whom Claude represented Nature; a day when even the landscapes of a past master in the art, like Gainsborough, suffered from restraints which the fashion of the day put upon them. It was the age when the crumbling cottage and blasted tree were at their meridian, when a gentle dalliance with what was supposed to be nature was a recognized item in the list of polite accomplishments of an Elizabeth Bennett or a Catherine Morland.

And Hazlitt's point of view was characteristic of the age; the dialogue on the Sistine Chapel, and the comparison between Raphael and Michel Angelo, is just what any cultivated amateur might have written. Considered as a contribution to

art criticism, it does not rise once above platitude, however graceful it may be in a literary sense.

Again, what painter, except from pure love of paradox, could have been expected to lay down the proposition that the world in general is just as good a judge of his work—that is to say, of all those virtues of technique, of drawing, of treatment of values, atmosphere and so forth, which go to differentiate what is good from what is bad —as his brother craftsman? "A painter is no more judge, I suppose, of how people feel and look under certain passions and events. Everybody sees as well as he whether figures on the canvas are like such a man, or like a cow, a tree, a bridge or a windmill." Would Hazlitt really have been willing to admit that the quality of a picture is to be determined by the degree of certainty with which we can label the various objects with which it is concerned, whether human beings, trees, windmills or what not? No! all this would be childish were it not explained—though it is not excused—by the feelings which prompted it. It is not the lover of art who is speaking; it is the hater of class privilege who is airing a grievance, and if proof of this were wanted it is to be found in other passages, lying almost cheek by jowl with the one I have quoted, in which this startling doctrine is directly traversed and contra-

dicted. I might go on to show that Hazlitt comprehended very imperfectly how the skilled painter works; he judged the master by the apprentice, and attributed to mere drudgery results which nothing but supreme dexterity could ever have given, nor, when he found himself in conflict with Sir Joshua on this point, did he make any but the smallest concession possible.

But enough of cavilling. Hazlitt never vaunted his own powers in the domain of art, quite the reverse, and he could well afford some degree of failure in one subject when his range was so wide. To survey mankind from China to Peru was, indeed, no more than he did in his comprehensive spirit of inquiry.

Before he was ten he gave his brother a formidable list of subjects which he proposed taking up, and added, in deprecation of the objections which he knew would follow, "I shall not, I suppose, paint the worse for knowing everything else." Such a standard was a high one even for youthful enthusiasm to set up, but if philosophy and politics, poetry, the drama and the fine arts, the airy webs of fancy and the stern realities of the prize ring are not everything, at all events they offer a bill of fare in which the most jaded appetite should find some dish to its taste.

When one sits down to read Hazlitt it is good to remember that one has to do with a man of prejudices; one does not look, for instance, for unbiassed political portraiture, and one certainly does not get it. Fox, as a matter of course, is regarded with more than favour; Pitt is lucky in being treated with toleration; Burke is a grand figure as he comes first from the gifted sculptor's hands, but presently he lies in fragments on the floor, as the canvases had done in old days. Hazlitt had undoubtedly strained a point in his earlier paper. "This character," he writes with conscious pride, "was written in a fit of extravagant candour at a time when I thought I could do justice, or more than justice, to an enemy, without betraying a cause;" but he might have spared his more liberal-minded self a recantation quite so wholesale as that of the "additional remarks." However, all he ever wrote, whether on Burke himself or on his style, is far too excellent in matter to quarrel with.

Hazlitt's latest editor was surely never better inspired than when he decided not to omit the paper on "The Fight" from his collection. Was it to wound susceptibilities? So much the worse for them. This and the paper on John Cavanagh, a perfect mine of brilliant metaphor and bold antithesis, are both simply delightful. This is

Hazlitt in a new and pleasant phase, and if these two papers had never been written, we should hardly have known the whole man, if we do now. He displays a lightness of heart, a gaiety of manner, a completeness of *abandon*, hardly to have been looked for. He assumes with his rakish coat and green silk handkerchief, "those ornaments of life," something of the phraseology and bearing of the craft. He wears a jaunty and truant air, as of a schoolboy who is being initiated into the mysteries of life. Everything, even discomfort, makes for enjoyment now we are in the tune for it. The national ham and eggs—fit prelude to the national pastime—never had quite the same flavour before. But when the ring side is reached, a more heroic tone is assumed. It is a new Pindar celebrating a new Isthmian contest. The Teucer-like figure of Hickman, greater in the generous acceptance of defeat than in the boastful anticipation of victory, is a veritable work of art, and his niche in the temple of fame must be next Borrow's Tom Bedford or nowhere.

Hazlitt, the critic, is as kindly-natured as he is clear of vision, or, what is much the same thing, he chooses by preference to write of what he likes rather than of what is distasteful to him, of qualities to the consideration of which he brings a comprehension begotten by sympathy, rather

than of those which do not happen to be virtues to him, and might therefore chance to be maltreated beyond their deserts. His dissection of Tooke's "Diversions of Purley" is indeed scathing enough, but he does not sit down to scourge insignificance, as Macaulay scourged Sadler and Montgomery, for the pure pleasure of hearing the lash sing through the air. As for the merits of his criticism, the verdict of the small circle of admirers among his contemporaries has been acclaimed to-day. Whoever he may be dealing with, whether it is Scott or Wordsworth, Fielding or Smollett, Sir Thomas Browne or Jeremy Taylor, one closes the book with something of that added insight into the nature of his subject which a fine representation of one of Shakspeare's plays will give. He may strike out a new path for our understanding to travel along; he may only clear away the overgrowth from an old one; but he is sure to do the last, and, in many cases, will do the first. As for the Essays of the Imagination, they may strike some as being discursive; the title is usually attractive, the matter does not always seem strictly relevant, "*Manillas vocat, hoc prætexit nomine caules.*" The truth is that he does not write a set theme; his imagination carries him into byways; he saunters by the way under the spell of memory; they are reveries become

vocal, the fruit of a long habit of reflection, full of suggestiveness, often paradoxical, never dull.

If Hazlitt displays his personality in his writings, he also lets us into the secret of his literary predilections, of his friendships and intimacies in the great world of books. No one ever made his own thoughts the setting for so many jewels from the treasure house of literature at large; gem and casket alike find a new grace. In life he was accustomed to address large audiences, but as a writer he is best appreciated when his reader holds him *tête-à-tête*. To read him aloud, at least as regards his more imaginative pieces, is to risk being quagged in the multitude of quotations. There is generally some straining of the sense—it both is what it illustrates and is not—even when the quotation is most apt, and this is just what gives it piquancy, a straining so slight that the reader takes it in his stride and rejoices in the exercise, but, for the listener, who is not sure whether the author is speaking in his own person, or using some one else as his medium, there is some disturbance of the even tenour of his course. He hesitates as though another Milanion were casting golden apples at his feet; he is baulked, like a timid horseman at a locked gate.

Hazlitt is much too good to keep to oneself; and the wish "to impart a joy, imperfect while

unshared," is natural. It is, however, one by which a solitary and one so uncommunicative in his pleasures as he was would not have set much store, and we must, perforce, follow his example, and gloat over his good things in secret.

He had the defects of his qualities, but those qualities were love for mankind, hatred of oppression, scorn of littleness, worship of the truth. There was nothing mean in his constitution, and to offer an apology for his failings is an insolence. Death has been kind to him, with a kindness far beyond the wintry smiles of contemporary appreciativeness. Perhaps he felt that it might be so. "Death cancels everything but truth, and strips a man of everything but genius and virtue. It is a sort of natural canonization. It makes the meanest of us sacred; it instals the poet in his immortality, and lifts him to the skies. Death is the great assayer of the sterling ore of talent."

DICKENS AND DAUDET.

It would be a folly to look for anything like a complete analogy between two writers, one of whom was an Englishman, with all the peculiar strength and weakness which belong to the name, and the other a native of the South of France grafted on a Parisian stock, who is at this moment perhaps the most notable example of a phase of French literary thought, the key-note of which is the hopeless acceptance of a state of society in which the moral sense has no place. If Dickens, fired with generous indignation, exaggerated in his own mind many of the evils which he thought it to be his mission to right, and conjured up unrealities to lash them with long-drawn sarcasm, yet the human nature to which he introduces us, however abnormal it may be in general character, is neither extravagant in its virtue or its vice. There is plenty of meanness and crime, but there is a large measure of human kindness and a happy absence of the prevailing modern sin. The so-called School of

Decadence, on the other hand, to which Daudet belongs, betrays a strange and diseased imaginativeness which distorts "contemporary manners," while its possessors believe that it merely reflects them. Such men and women as Daudet and his fellows paint might conceivably have peopled the cities of the Plain, but the most abandoned capitals of to-day can show nothing so uniformly immoral, nothing like the dead level of selfish and sordid vice which they offer for our delectation. Such a form of caricature as this in which each individual may have his counterpart in the world around us is the exact converse of the obvious exaggeration of individual traits in which Dickens indulged, a proceeding which possibly sins against the canons of art, but does not offend the moral code. Daudet, whose sensitiveness for his art leaves him little care for morals, hides away what might put us on the alert, and will persuade us, if he can, to accept as normal what is really an outrage against human nature. It has been said that he is content merely to go down to the Boulevard for his material and take what he finds there, but it is a poor compliment to the Boulevardiers to suppose that he does not select his subjects with some care. As a matter of fact, even the less thorough-going apostles of realism find themselves unable to make much

direct use of virtue, and Daudet is certainly no exception to the rule. His actual method of gathering his materials and putting them into form is no secret at all; no writer, indeed, has taken the public more wholly into his confidence. With pure invention, if we are to believe him, he has almost nothing to do; he replaces it, however, by constant observation of a minute kind, noting methodically, as an artist may make thumb-nail sketches, not only traits of character, but even motions of the head, shrugs of the shoulder, the countless details, in a word, which go to the completion of an artistic picture. His business is to select and combine, to provide the motive force which shall set the passions in action. Jack, Moronval, Hirsch, Labassindre, Belisaire, Rivals, d'Argenton, Ida de Barençy, to take only one book, have all lived and loved and schemed and hated in real life; indeed, it is only when a perspicuous public insists on applying the key, that our author is found, oddly enough, to have been for once in a way relying on his native imagination; the connection of Gambetta's name with the comic but contemptible hero of a well-known book was hardly avoidable in view of the close way in which the beginnings of the actual statesmen tallied with those of the novelist's creation. A similar mistake was

made by Dickens when he represented Harold Skimpole, who was universally recognized as a most unfortunate travesty of Leigh Hunt, engaged in bringing out his "Reminiscences," which was precisely what Leigh Hunt was doing at the time. Such coincidences do not escape notice, and matters are hardly mended when the writer points, as both those in question did, to the real dissimilarity of character as a proof of the groundlessness of the charge. Acute as were Dickens's powers of observation, this particular instance, the incomplete sketch of Landor in the same book, and that of his own father in the person of Micawber are perhaps the only examples of his reliance on known models. Strikingly original, and full of fancy, his personages are less life-like than those of Daudet, and are clearly the product of a mind which was as much repelled as that of the French writer is attracted by debasing and passionate vice.

That there should be one single feature common to the work of these two men, so differently constituted, subject to such diverse influences, and living in surroundings so dissimilar is a standing wonder. It is true that, generally speaking, the likeness lies rather in the materials than in the treatment, for, whereas the first conception was everything with Dickens, the French writer

works his characters out with the greatest thoroughness, and impregnates them with an unwholesomeness which Dickens could not have conveyed, if he would, to the most sordid of his villains, but it would be wrong to say that there are no instances of parallel treatment, and, as a matter of fact, the writers do approach each other sufficiently near at certain points to denote the existence of a more fundamental similarity than is implied in the mere selection of material. Probably the chief reason is to be found in the history of their early lives. Thrown, both of them, when little more than children, on their own resources, driven to earn a precarious livelihood, and to consort with the poor and out-at-elbows, they endured slights from which their self-respect was long in recovering, learnt by bitter experience what kind of life the poor lead, and, by a happier chance, how unselfishly helpful the members of that great class are to one another.

These early lessons have given the specific bent to all their work. That is practically Daudet's answer to the charge of plagiarism which has, not unreasonably, been brought against him. It is an excellent one up to a certain point, and it cannot be denied that, in a greater or less degree, the internal evidence of their works bears out the

justification. They had the common heritage of a sympathetic nature, a common aim—for we will credit Daudet with one—the levelling up of the lower classes. Dickens worked to this end by specific indictments, by attacks on the workhouse system, which he held up again and again to obloquy as the bugbear of the poor, by depicting the manners and customs of the Debtors' Prison, the unholy joys of the swaggering spendthrift, the shrinking misery of their less robust fellow-prisoners. He paints the smug iniquities of the Court of Chancery in some hundreds of pages of sustained indignation: he sneers at the House of Commons, at the administration of justice, whether by Mr. Justice Stareleigh in his Court, or Mr. Nupkins in his dining-room, at the Circumlocution Office and its mazy proceedings; he carps at the cheap benevolence of foundation schools—"Charitable Grinders" or what not—which costs the giver nothing, makes a laughing-stock of the victim, and in the end turns him out a "Biler." He takes poor Miss Flite's madness to be undoubted when she proclaims her approval of the principles which govern the conferring of titles—"I am afraid she believed what she said, for there were moments when she was very mad indeed:" the constituted authorities are to him what the red rag is to the bull; he never tires of

contrasting the insolence of the rich with the courtesy of the poor; he paints the miseries of the French peasantry with the vigour of a Carlyle; he vents his feelings on impossible scenes like that between Mr. Dombey and Toodle the engine driver on the platform at Paddington; the sight of a wisp of crape in Toodle's cap, a mute tribute to the memory of little Paul, moves the father to an Arctic chilliness of demeanour and speech, which finds an echo in the unsympathetic Bagstock, "Never educate that sort of people, Sir; damme, Sir, it never does! It always fails!"

Daudet is not a whit behind hand in his general disapprobation of things that are. He devotes a volume with more than questionable taste to defamation of the Academy. From its "dusty cupola" to its musty dictionary he covers it with ridicule: "Nous avons quarante oies qui gardent le capitole," he might have said with Diderot: its most honoured historian wastes his substance in ludicrous forgeries, and incorporates them in a book which is to mark a new era;[1] the stupidity of the members is only equalled by the greed with which they touch their pay, the assumption with which they wear the braided coat, and the scan-

[1] Astier-Réhu, the Academician, and Albin-Fage, the forger, were drawn from life. Their originals were M. Chasles of the Academy and a certain Vrain-Lucas.

dalous means to which they, or their wives, resort to secure election. The Chamber of Deputies is tried and found wanting in the person of Numa Roumestan, Minister of Public Instruction, with a private life which Daudet makes depraved to a degree not necessary for his purpose, who is devoid of all genuine conviction, except that the present moment is always paramount, is ready to throw political consistency to the winds, begins a letter accepting a post under the Empire, and, being shamed out of it by his wife, merely inserts a negative in the middle of a sounding phrase which he cannot find it in his heart to forego, traffics shamelessly in appointments to further his amours, and is borne away on a torrent of words to lavish promises which, when the excitement is over, he brushes aside. "Do words mean anything?" asks his wife. That is entirely a question of latitude, the "méridional" does not take them seriously. In "Le Nabab" we are introduced to bubble companies who take corner lots, run up a large bill for furniture and upholstery and forget to pay their clerks, and to doctors, who make their patients temporarily sleek with arsenic pills. There is much bitter writing which is not the less so that it certainly is not done with that sense of the necessity of getting a wrong made right, which is so characteristic of Dickens; nor does it even strike one

that Daudet is giving expression to his own individual convictions so much as to the views of the literary clique,—Flaubert, Zola, the de Goncourts, Tourgénieff—to which he belonged. The cause of the poor is pleaded in his works rather by implication than in so many words; sometimes they are virtuous in spite of temptation; more often they are vicious by reason of it; in either case the contrast between luxury and want, between vice which is accepted open-armed, and vice which it needs a heroic effort to repel is striking enough. If their portrayal should by chance do something towards modifying them, so much the better, but if that is the writer's motive, what is his meaning when he says that it is merely the craving for reality, which forces him to throw etiquette aside, and display the passions as they are?

It was during the Siege of Paris, when he was attached to a battalion of working men, that, as he tells us, he came to understand the poor, and to love the people in the vices which are the outcome of misery and ignorance. With a far greater faculty than Dickens could pretend to for painting gentlefolk, a great noble like the Duc de Mora, a queenly woman like Frederica of Illyria, he is at his best and at his kindliest when he is dealing with those of humbler station. He is struck, as Dickens was, by the sacrifices which

they make to help one another. "La vraie famille est chez les humbles," he says: we have to go to a fireside like that of the Delobelles to learn what self-renunciation is: eighteen hours out of the twenty-four the mother and daughter sit at work that the object of their blind worship may wear the broadcloth which his dignity demands, and sup on some delicate dish when he returns at night from his exhausting avocations. "Jack" is full of scenes which certainly atone in a large measure for the almost impossible villainy on which the story turns; nothing is better than the description of the joint household formed by Belisaire and Madame Weber with Jack. These two tender-hearted and simple people, when their comrade is lying in a state of fever which seems unending, make it a point of honour to beggar themselves rather than let him be taken to the hospital; Jack overhears them talking over ways and means, and ill as he is, insists on leaving them; leaning on Belisaire's arm he reaches the Parvis Notre Dame, is examined by the doctor and admitted: these scenes and those which follow at the bedside might easily be overwrought, but as a matter of fact they are told with a directness which compares favourably with Dickens's manner in kindred situations. No author could have been more thoroughly penetrated with the subject

than was Daudet in writing this book. A record of cruelty, bitterness, and misery, which are almost incredible, it falls far short, as he tells us, of the reality. He had known the original of Jack with an intimacy for which his own kindness of heart was responsible; the pathos of the story had touched him as the man, long before its possibilities were suggested to him as the artist. The hint once given, however, he never doubted for a moment that the central interest of his story would hold the public as it had held him; hence the general simplicity and breadth of effect: the pitiful details of the later scenes are merged in the spectacle of Jack's filial piety warring down the natural revolt against consistent and thoughtless neglect, and it is not till at the very last a theatrical effect is introduced, which suggests the ringing down of the curtain, that we become conscious of the teller of the story apart from the story itself.

To Dickens's charming pictures of humble life it is hardly necessary to refer. He was never happier than when he was adding a fresh jewel to the crown of virtues with which he liked to think the brow of poverty was adorned; of their sympathy for each other he said, "What the poor feel for the poor is little known except to themselves and God," and for those above them in

station he believed it to be equally real. Where but in his pages shall we find so uncomplaining and loving a loyalty as that of Joe Gargery for a forgetful Pip? Where such prudent counsel, such frank bearing and active helpfulness as in Mrs. Bagnet? Where shall we look for an unselfishness to match that of the Boffins, who did not lose their virtues with their poverty, or a fine courtesy like that of Cap'en Cuttle, a true gentleman if ever there was one? Was ever another household so warmly hospitable as that of the Peggottys, or fidelity so unswerving as that of Mark Tapley and Sam Weller? There is naturally another side to the picture, but we shall hardly find real, sordid, unrelieved, unforgivable wickedness, the type which the reader of Daudet is always meeting, till we look into the later works, when the lightness of touch was gone, and the source of inspiration was failing, to Riderhood, above all to Wegg: the latter is possibly more true to life than many of the humorous and sturdy miscreants of an earlier day—one would hardly look to meet a Squeers, a Fagin or a Mantalini in ordinary life—but the wildest improbability is infinitely less jarring than this slight perversion of a reality which is in itself too mean for Art.

There is a second bond between the two writers

to which Daudet might reasonably have referred in self-defence, and that is an evident appreciation of boyhood, to which many admirable studies of children scattered through their pages bear witness. The types are characteristically distinct, a result which naturally follows from the insight of the writers, for in boyhood the national traits are less modified by the idiosyncrasy of the individual than comes to be the case later; the cosmopolitan child is, happily, not common, and Daudet's boys are as unmistakably French in temperament as Dickens's are English. There is nothing in the boyhood to which we are accustomed quite so excruciatingly contemptible as the behaviour of the hopeful young Marquis de Boucoyran to "Le petit chose." The traditions of English school life are sufficiently strong to restrain the meanest nature from venturing on a treachery which may be natural to it, but they do things differently in France. The boy in question, relying on his physical superiority and the support of the class, insults the master—Daudet himself, for the incident occurs in his autobiography—the poor little usher, beside himself with rage, takes the law into his own hands and wreaks his vengeance on the vile body of his enemy. The latter is subdued for the moment, but the next day takes the step which all the boys seem to accept as the

natural one, and tells his father, the net result being that the usher is lectured *coram populo*, not only by the head-master, but also by the indignant parent, who indulges in ignoble threats—and is summarily cashiered. The whole incident, which is obviously true, is an interesting commentary on the difference between English and French boys —a difference which is fostered and emphasized at every turn. The odd thing is that the scene in "David Copperfield," when Steerforth displays his real nature in his cowardly attack on Mr. Mell, is on all fours with it. Mr. Creakle's feelings are not less outraged than were those of the French principal, his proceedings are very similar, and the results for poor Mr. Mell identical. Probably this incident is founded on an actual school experience, but the "Shame, J. Steerforth," of Traddles, who would have done well to die during his admirable youth, shows that the sense of honour in the English school could not be wholly stifled even by the divinity of Steerforth.

Dickens's boys range from Paul Dombey to Charley Bates and the fat boy in "Pickwick," from the dreamer and visionary to the widest of wideawake, and again to the votary of a somnolent repletion. So long as "Dombey" is read at all Paul will have his admirers and detractors, and so for the matter of that will little Nell. Poetically con-

ceived, Nell, like Jo, seems nevertheless made to tread the boards. The mission of the stage-child is to draw tears, and an audience is rarely careful to consider the quality of the pathos which moves it; but for the reader, who approaches her in the less-heated atmosphere of the closet, Nell is felt to be an over-coloured and unreal personage who walks the stage on emotional stilts. A born actor, Dickens had a keen appreciation of stage effects and moving situations, which led him to do work which needs the gaslight to subdue its garishness. The death of a child is at all times an unnatural thing, and is too ready a way of harrowing the feelings to be lightly resorted to. Either it is painfully affecting or it is felt to be a device and is resented; yet Dickens takes us from death-bed to death-bed, from Nell to Paul Dombey, and from Paul to Jo, and at all three the spirit of melodrama is present. The death of Jo is absolutely inexcusable, and the plot does not in the least demand it: till the author was moved to make him sickly Jo had many good points, and deserved anything rather than to be cut off in the flower of his youth —say, to be apprenticed to Snagsby. As for little Paul, it is almost as difficult to acquit him of staginess; but so closely are one's recollections of him bound up with Toots's unforgettable confidence on the subject of waistcoats, and the

amenities of Mrs. Pipchin's establishment, that a good deal can be forgiven. Even the precociousness of disease, however, cannot excuse all his flights, and children do not die enfeebled old dotards of five out of Mr. Gilbert's romantic verse.

In depicting the London gamin Dickens showed a master hand, and the student of his manners and customs will find in Tom Scott, Quilp's attendant sprite, and the unsurpassable group at Fagin's, a fascinating book of reference. There is yet another finished study which stands out from a multitude of effective sketches—that of Pip, the leading figure as he is the narrator of a story which, for quaint but wholly unaffected simplicity, was never surpassed by its author. Through the haunting adventures on the marsh and the sufferings at the hands of Mrs. Gargery and Uncle Pumblechook, through the days of his new-born passion for Estelle, and, above all, his relations with the grown man to whom he extends his moral protection, as Jenny Wren did to the old reprobate who called her daughter, and little Dorrit to the father of the Marshalsea, through all this time till the journey to London, the narrative is one of sustained beauty. Daudet has nothing which can stand with this, or with David's early reminiscences, good as much of his work is.

"Jack," the man, has already been referred to. The boy is no less interesting, no less skilfully drawn. His was a clinging and affectionate nature, whose sole object of love—his mother—was even in childhood dimly, and at moments, perceived to be unworthy. Jack's place is gradually usurped by the lover d'Argenton, but, for the time, the interest is centred in the brilliant sketch of the little Prince of Dahomey, into whose society Jack was thrown. Mâdou, for whom at first nothing in the Gymnase Moronval was too good, has at the time we come across him, thanks to the deposition of his father from his throne, been degraded to the position of general help. To a calmness under misfortune which is essentially savage in character and is dependent on the possession of a charm, he unites an affectionateness of disposition which soon makes a bond between the two unfortunates; their beds are side by side, and Mâdou regales Jack with stories in which the local colour is somewhat too strong for the nerves of the little Parisian. Mâdou makes up his mind to flight; he disappears, and when he is brought back his charm is gone; his heart is broken, the thin film of civilization is shred away. As he lies on his death-bed all the years of his exile are wiped out, and he lives in spirit in his native country. Death was the only possible end

for him, and it is treated with a reticence which disarms objection and invests it with a striking reality. Much that is better unread awaits the reader of "Les rois en exil," but among the good things which it contains must be counted the sketch of the Comte Zara, in whom a devoted mother and a loyal subject sees the future king. The son of a father whose sins are visited on his child, he is the victim of inherited weakness and accidental disfigurement, and his personality is not a decided one; but if the sketch is in monochrome it is by the hand of an artist, and the episode of the visit to the "Fancy Bread" Fair, when the tired and happy child is carried high by his tutor, Méraut, is told with much grace.

Dickens's own personal feelings entered so deeply into the composition of David Copperfield—it was his favourite child and he does not mind confessing that it draws tears from him when he reads it—that it is natural to find there his best work. Daudet stands back from the canvas as he works and views it in a spirit which is rather critical than emotional, but in spite of this one might have anticipated that the brother, who when little more than a child himself, was father and mother to him at once—ma mère Jacques—would have inspired him to paint a picture which should be a masterpiece: if this is not actually the case

the portrait is nevertheless an excellent piece of work. A childhood of tears, to which his father's constant cries of "âne" and "butor" may have somewhat contributed, led to a boyhood too busy to allow so frequent a recourse to the handkerchief, but distinguished by no less real sensibility. "Le petit chose," after his dire experiences as a master, makes his way to Paris, where Jacques is employed as a secretary. While Jacques works, he spoils paper much to the contentment of an admiring brother, and helps to make his scanty pay hopelessly inadequate. Jacques loves with fond humility, his brother sees and conquers. Jacques is called away, his brother runs into debt, deceives him, deserts the girl whose love he had attracted from him, and is only rescued when Jacques, throwing up his appointment, comes back to Paris to save him, to look one reproach, and to die. Fiction is inextricably mixed up with fact, but so much of the story as deals with the elder brother is practically historical. There are many happy touches in the life of the boy schoolmaster himself, the father with thirty-five children, who was found by one of his fellows regaling his class with fairy stories during school-hours, but enough has been said to show the existence of a faculty for reading and interpreting child nature very similar to that of Dickens.

If laughter is akin to tears, so is humour to pity. It was so in the case of Dickens, and Daudet, without approaching him in a quality which we believe to be an Englishman's birthright, has a larger share than falls to many of his fellow-countrymen.

Without "Pickwick" it is hardly likely that we should ever have had the trilogy of which Tartarin is the hero, but of likeness there is absolutely none. The prodigious Tartarin himself is the kindly exaggeration of a type, while Pickwick was, so to speak, a monster to whom the laws which govern human conduct are not applicable. A sublime and engaging innocence is common to both, but in Tartarin's case it is in a measure related to the form with which Mark Twain, himself a debtor to Dickens, has made us familiar. Pickwick is the more extraordinary creation of the two, because in spite of the extremely undignified spectacle which he, at times, presents, he never ceases to be a gentleman. Tartarin could make no such lapses with impunity. There is pathos in Pickwick, not in the scenery of the Debtors' Prison which seems misplaced in so joyous a book, but in the relations of the master and servant. Tartarin, too, is genuinely touching more than once, and never more so than in his strange wooing, but Daudet might have let us

rest in the belief that he still lives. That moving spectacle of the discredited hero, never more heroic than in his fall, making his perilous way across the bridge in the teeth of half a gale, is needlessly harrowing to the feelings; the extravagance of the descent from Mont Blanc, which is described in the second of the series, is another mistake. The wildest improbabilities, like Mark Twain's account of the ascent of the Rigi, are perfectly legitimate, but simple physical impossibilities are out of place, because they transport us at once to another world, a world in which nothing short of the feats of a Munchausen are satisfying.

Elsewhere, as in the papers on the "Salons ridicules" and in the account of his first introduction to a Parisian "at home," Daudet faintly recalls the satiric humour of Thackeray, but it is a good deal less scathing and somewhat more commonplace. We have now noticed three several faculties, the presence of which make for a similarity in the work of two men who at first sight seem to have literally nothing in common, but when these are admitted there still remain striking points of resemblance which cannot be explained antecedently. Such, for example, is the kindred nature of the character studies. Dickens has of course endowed our literature with a collec-

tion of brilliantly executed portraits of unequalled freshness and individuality. His men and women have, almost without exception, strongly marked characteristics, which are never lost to view for a moment, which probably develop into nothing further, but are delightful in themselves. The characters may be important or not: in the former case the outline is more completely filled in, but the silhouette is as decided in one case as the other; the limits are fixed, there is no room for growth, and nothing is left to the imagination of the reader by a writer in whom the source of invention was always bubbling over. The world to which we are introduced is not wholly like real life, but it is one in which we are glad to forget for a time our more humdrum fellow-men. To individualize would be to make a list of names which, even now, are household words. Daudet is less known to us, but it requires little more than a glance to convince one that his method, except in the case of the more important characters, is virtually identical.

The staff of the Gymnase Moronval have already been alluded to, and they will serve my present purpose as well as any other characters. Not only are Moronval himself, Hirsch, Labassindre and d'Argenton lined in with all possible decision, but, following Dickens's almost invariable expe-

dient, Daudet has equipped them all with tricks and catchwords which are constantly being insisted on, as if one's recognition of them might otherwise be doubtful. Évariste Moronval is a cringing, sponging, ambitious West Indian, with literary aspirations and a dropping of the r's in ordinary speech which has a tendency to become tedious. Labassindre, formerly a workman in an iron foundry and now a singer, a coarse-fibred, heartless brute with a spice of pseudo-artistic jargon, and an appreciation of the dignity of labour, which dates from the day of his quitting the foundry, has his own set of stock phrases, and when he is not rolling them out is trying his favourite note. Hirsch is a sham doctor, a chevalier-d'industrie like the others, whose patients are mostly out of town, who is armed with a bag of powder which makes people sneeze, and devotes his time to chemical experiments. As for d'Argenton, who is drawn in a masterly way, his note is a cold selfishness which will sacrifice a good deal to be fawned upon and worshipped, but will sacrifice nothing at all for any other object. In conversation he moves on relentlessly like a very car of Juggernaut; inexorably he repeats his feeble retort or crushing platitude. "Alors je lui ai dit ce mot cruel." He, too, like Moronval, is literary, but a poet while

the other would be a journalist. At moments the poetic impulse is strong on him, his frenzied brain teems with ideas, but they are too ethereal for translation to paper; the result is that other writers whose sensibility is not so fine appropriate them. Émile Augier himself is not above culling the choicest blooms from the unwritten "Pommes d'Atalante." All this is clever enough, but it is in d'Argenton's relations to Jack and Jack's mother that Daudet's individual skill is displayed; here there is a subtlety of which Dickens was incapable, an art which does not describe a character in set terms, but expounds it by its actions.

If we turn to Dickens's most ambitious attempts in a line which, for him, always spelt failure—Edith Dombey—his shortcomings will be very patent. Edith has naturally been contrasted, much to her disadvantage, with Ethel Newcome, but we will rather take Rosalie Roumestan, who is a representative example of Daudet's workmanship, for comparison with her. The subject of "Numa Roumestan"—the book—is simply the contrast between the northern nature at its best, and the southern, it is only charitable to suppose, at its worst. Rosalie, who inherits the clear brain and temperate nature of northern parents, is captivated by Numa's young enthusiasm, while she is still little more than a girl, and fancies that

in the glittering tinsel she sees the glow of pure gold. Such self-deception could not last long; she learns the unfaithfulness of a man who, with a strange double nature, loads her with caresses which, at the moment, are perfectly sincere. She finds him writing a letter which tears his political consistency to shreds; she hears him lavish promises, which experience tells her are mere empty words; she cannot, in the nature of things help despising him, but she will hardly breathe it to herself. Her life is devoted to keeping up appearances for herself as well as before others, to giving her husband a dignity which does not belong to him. Proud and truthful beyond the common run, she is consistently affectionate to the man who outrages her self-respect and treads sincerity under foot. What she is Frederica of Illyria is also, in her degree, to the most ignoble of consorts, while side by side with these two portraits hangs the consummate study of Risler, of Risler of whom one feels all along that there is a volcanic fire in the depths of his nature which may some day break out.

What Edith Dombey's provocation was everyone knows, and her nature has been portrayed for us with all the skill which Dickens could bring to an uncongenial task, but the element of staginess is sadly conspicuous, the frown and the curling lip

do duty for much characterization which cannot be expressed by so bald an employment of stage directions, and her behaviour seems to show a complete misconception by the author of his own creation. Is it conceivable for a moment that a woman, the keynote of whose character is a sort of fierce pride, could have behaved as she did to Mr. Dombey, lowering herself to the level of a man who was really less than human, or that she should have proclaimed the relations in which she stood to her husband before the guests at a large reception? What should have been forcible is merely exaggerated, and the result is fatal. Instead of a picture with lights and shades, with mysteries to fathom, and beauties which strike one with admiration, we have here a kind of signboard painting, flat, unvarying and unsuggestive.

There is a class of studies in Daudet's work, due to his craving for representing in its ghastly nakedness the "grand drame moderne," of which we find hardly a trace in Dickens. Characters like Sidonie Risler, Séphora Leemans, or la Bachellery were absolutely abhorrent to his nature; he shut his eyes to their existence or treated them with a lightness of touch and purity of intention which purged them of unwholesomeness. What he could do he showed, once for all,

in the Sykes and Nancy scenes of "Oliver Twist," scenes which for real power, for unforced pathos and tragic intensity have few equals, but the whole treatment is radically distinct from that of Daudet. Indeed we find that when the latter is dealing with men and women who are swayed by passion he offers no point of resemblance to the English writer, whose fishing was by inclination and perhaps of necessity, in less troubled waters. But if we descend a stage from the Rislers and Fromonts, what do we find? A Chébe who is Silas Wegg under another name, a Desirée Delobelle in whom Jenny Wren lives again, alike in her lameness, her occupation, and her dreams of birds that sing and flowers that blow. Nor is this all, for Delobelle is no more original than is his devoted daughter. He has been compared or contrasted with Crummles, though they have no common ground except their profession, which, however integral a part of Crummles, might in Delobelle's case just as well have been something else. Paul Astier and Pecksniff, both architects and both charlatans, are no more unlike. But Delobelle's prototype exists none the less in the person of Turveydrop; substitute pure deportment for general staginess, and the two men are one and the same; alike in their sublime acceptance of self-sacrifice, in their use of their time, and even

in the very words with which they stamp a somewhat aimless existence with the hall-mark of a high purpose. "Je n'ai pas le droit de renoncer au théâtre," says Delobelle, following closely the "I have been faithful to my post since the days of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and I will not desert it now," of his model.

There is one difference between them, however, in which a certain note of brutality—characteristic of Daudet—is heard, viz., that while we leave Turveydrop in the calm enjoyment of an adoration which Turveydrop the younger and his bride genuinely feel, we have in the other case Desirée's painful awakening on her deathbed to the despicable character of her father, and her hopeless appeal to a nature which has nothing natural left in it. Other instances of this aggravation for the reader of a painful situation will be found in the half-veiled allusions of the worthies at the Gymnase Moronval to the position of Jack's mother, *in his presence;* in the hints of Ida de Barançy's own servants under similar circumstances, in the satisfaction with which Ida relieves herself of Jack on the first occasion of d'Argenton's coming to dinner—how different this to the scenes in "David Copperfield" under the Murdstone régime!—and in the talk of the servants at the so-called "Soire" in "Le Nabab," which may

well be compared with the historical swarry, if the fundamental difference between their respective authors is to be appreciated.

Plots, Daudet, properly speaking, has none, nor, in spite of the claims of his thick and thin admirers, is it possible to concede Dickens any skill in this respect. Both novelists start with a great leading idea, on which are threaded the play of passion or circumstance. "Le Nabab" is the record of the brief and meteoric course of a "nouveau riche." "Numa Roumestan," "Fromont," and "Les rois en exil," are long-drawn and passionate duos between man and wife; "Sappho" is the picture of the gradual degradation of a nature till all will power is gone, and Jean Gaussin, besides sharing with Richard Carstone (and Darnay) the distinction of being the only veritable "jeune premier" of his author, suffers at the hands of Sappho precisely what the chancery suit is responsible for in Richard's case.

Daudet writes racy French which by no means confines itself to the lines which the Academy has laid down, and his pure narrative is generally better than that of Dickens, but in actual word-painting, in felicitous turns and happy similes, he has nothing the skill of his predecessor; occasionally, indeed, he is strangely like him, as when he speaks of a solitary house which looks as if it

had been sent out to reconnoitre the situation, or when he describes the tightness of Saïd's skin, a piece of portraiture for which Bounderby might have sat, but, as a general rule, he lacks both the virtues and defects which followed from Dickens's infinite power of minute observation; he could never have stopped, as Dickens does in the description of the wreck of Steerforth's boat, to tell us that the arm of a man who is pointing at the body in the water has got an arrow tattooed upon it which points in the same direction; he is too good an artist; there is a consequent greater breadth, and his description of the Forest of Sénart—in which Louis XV. first found himself face to face with Madame de Pompadour—of the machinery at Indret, and of the southern landscape to which he is ever fondly reverting, may be set against Dickens's great storm, his picture of the flight of Magwitch, and his well-loved Kentish back-grounds.

For an Englishman, he cannot live with Dickens; the latter may descend to depict meanness, and, in the last of his completed works, he does so *ad nauseam*—but he is sane and wholesome; he moves us to boisterous laughter, and—not always when he means it most—to tears which are a credit to us. His characters, it is true enough, have little of the principle of

growth in them, but then they are giants from birth; they are pleasant to linger over and live with in memory, and their vices leave no taint behind. Such must have been Dickens's ambition, but no such fate can attend the writer who deliberately sets himself to uncloak the figure of Vice as Daudet does. Finished artist, but poor moralist, he flies to the mercenary love of woman and the infatuated passion of man as the centre round which everything turns, the engrossing, absorbing interest to which everyone is liable, to which most submit. His apologist may say, with the writer of amorous ditties quoted by Poe (who, by the way, might have remembered that dwellers in glass houses should not throw stones), that, provided the morals of an author are pure, it signifies nothing what may be the morals of his books. Is Poe too severe when he concludes that, in such a case, strict poetic justice demands the detention of the writer in purgatory, till a new generation shall arise which knows not his writings?

DIDEROT AS ART CRITIC.

If Diderot may fairly be termed the father of dramatic criticism, his title as the founder of the Critical Literature of Art is also hardly to be questioned. The drama was certainly his earlier love, probably his more congenial study; to the end of his days he was wont to seek in the canvas the reflections of the theatre; first and last his fine-art criticism was not only that of the literary man, but a little that of the stage-manager; scenic effects, the clever presentment of a domestic drama, the happy disposition of the persons on the stage, the expressiveness of their gestures, these were what really appealed to him, and by their excellences or defects in this respect the subjects of his analysis stood or fell. But we need not wonder that Diderot, who touched everything under the sun, should have touched art for its own sake, or that, touching, he should have adorned it; the occasion was all that was wanted, and when, in 1761, Grimm, whose correspondence with certain Northern sovereigns

was a sort of epitome of all that was of intellectual interest in contemporary Paris, suggested that he should make it more complete by contributing notices of the successive Salons, the occasion had come.

Diderot's latent capacity for being interested was prodigious; his enthusiasm was like a train of gunpowder which a spark would fire. There was always a warm corner in his heart for a new subject of interest, and he naturally was not slow to do for Grimm what he would probably have done for anyone who had asked him. Henceforward, therefore, the visit to the Salon every other year was to be something more than a ceremonial act, and Denis, the philosopher, had found a fresh world to conquer.

There are natures so sympathetic that the inner confidences of the subjects to which they are attracted are theirs at once; the history of Browning's understanding of art and architecture is a good example, but Diderot's art-criticism, in spite of that sensibility of soul of which he so often speaks, shows no such intimacy of relations as this. No human being indeed could have had it in him to be the Father Confessor of interests so multitudinous; the lucid intellect could always surprise something of the secret, but could not hope always to deserve the confidence, and his

relations with art are a case in point. He admits, indeed, with a shrug, and the experience was quite inevitable, that to whatever subject he turned he always found himself face to face with the specialist, whose knowledge was of that essential and intimate kind which is denied to the possessor of a more comprehensive taste; but this is hardly the expression of a regret. No one, however insignificant, wishes at the bottom of his heart to be other than he is; and Diderot would not have been himself if his complaint, so to call it, had been baseless. Everything he ever wrote was in a sense a *pièce d'occasion;* it was a mere question of temperament; a sudden enthusiasm winged his pen, or an easy complaisance sacrificed it to the importunity of a stranger. He was the last man to follow his chase, nose to ground, till he should run it to earth in a half-score of heavy volumes. He digressed while he pursued, turned up byways, dashed across country, loitered at one moment, devoured the earth in his course the next. He was too passionate for finality, but too masterful and too luminous for anything but a profound and individual comprehension.

In this strong personal note lay much of the strength and attractiveness of the "Salons." What his stock in trade of general artistic knowledge may

have been when he passed from silence to speech it is difficult to guess, but it is clear that his criticism is the voice itself and not the echo. The tones are Diderot's and the thoughts are no less recognizably his, daring when they were uttered, because they were those of an original thinker, safe because he did not venture beyond his own province. Of the technique of painting he knew nothing, and made no pretence of doing so; never was criticism directed more completely to the accidental, and with less reference to the vital, qualities of the thing criticized than in his dealing with the art of his day, and yet, in spite of this serious limitation, he let a flood of light into dim corners, and did much to brush away the cobwebs of long-established and irrational custom. The want of technical knowledge itself, the immunity from the numbing influence of a long academic training, was in itself the solid guarantee of a fresh and unbiassed point of departure.

It was an age of academic tyranny, and Diderot cried out for freedom, for Nature as against convention, for the individual as against the school. Listen to what he says,—"The study of anatomy has its advantages, but the danger is lest the artist should bear it too much in mind, lest he should wish to show off his knowledge, that in spite of the flesh he should always be thinking of the

muscle." "Compare the Laocoon and his boys (small men rather) with the Elgin marbles," says the author of "Rab and his Friends," "the riders on the frieze, so comely in their going, so lissom, their skin slipping so sweetly over their muscles; their modestly representing not of what they know, but of what they are."

The Greeks thought dissection a profanity, and studied the muscles from the outside, in their relations, so to speak, not in the abstract, under natural, not unnatural, conditions. How exactly does this happy phrase, "slipping over their muscles," express the effect which Diderot asked for. He took up his parable against too slavish a study of the antique, it is true, but had he lived in the time of our fathers, one may picture him rivalling even the perfervid enthusiasm of Haydon over Lord Elgin's treasure-trove. It is the stultification, the remorseless levelling down of talent in the School of Art which shocks him. "At last," he quotes from Chardin, "after days and nights of toil, we are put before Nature herself, and all the studies of the previous years seem to profit us nothing; we feel as helpless as when a pencil was first put into our hands." What would he have said to the miserable story of the painter Renoir, as Mr. George Moore tells it us? Renoir had struggled for years to give expression

to his individuality: success had come at last, and buyers were beginning to be attracted, "For the first time in his life he had a little money in hand, and he thought he would like a holiday. . . . He went to Venice to study Tintoretto . . . and became aware of the fact that he could not draw like him. When he returned to Paris he resolved to subject himself to two years of hard study in an Art school. For two years he laboured in the life class, and at the end of that time he had utterly destroyed every trace of the charming and delightful art which it had taken twenty years to build up."

Diderot held the balance between the study of nature and that of the antique, and he blessed himself that nature cannot be reproduced with absolute precision: there is a border-land of conventionality on which the painter is allowed, rather is obliged, to stray. There is a liberty for individuality approved by some, proscribed by others; we do not ask for a perfection of imitation which is impossible, but we ask for a perfection of relation between one part of the picture and the other, a unity of composition, a harmony of all the parts. "When one has once admitted," he says, "that the sun of the painter and that of Nature are not one and the same, is not one involved in another admission

from which flows an infinity of consequences? The first, that one must not ask of art results which are beyond her power, the second that criticism of work which is harmonious must only be made with great circumspection."

Ordinary folk, so Diderot tells us, look at everything in a picture-gallery, and understand nothing; fashionable people are interested only in the portraits of their acquaintance, and pass over subject-pictures; the literary man, on the other hand, neglects the portraits for the large compositions. The implicit understanding that in a picture the subject is all-important is highly characteristic. The philosopher stands before "a great vaulted cloister," by Robert, and is struck with wonder at the ruined vault. What nation raised this monument? he asks, Where are the builders? In a word his appreciation is purely subjective. To the imaginative, to the student of human passions, the ruins will be eloquent, to the great army of the matter-of-fact they will be dumb. M. Robert, after all, goes for but little when the critic hurries to take so much on his own shoulders, and this is Diderot's attitude, not once, or twice, or even a score of times, but almost without exception, whether in Fine Art criticisms, or literary appreciations, or psychological studies. He is borne away on the flood of his own ima-

ginings; he rearranges a canvas in thought; he rewrites a book; he remodels a human being, and the impression of the original is lost for him in that of its reconstituted self.

Sainte-Beuve says that Diderot never came across a wicked man or a bad book, because he never let them remain so. Everything alike went into the melting-pot and came out stamped with the critic's own hall-mark. He would improvise a motive, and father a depth of meaning on the most unlikely stock. Arrived in the young David's studio, he seizes on his canvas as the groundwork for a thousand noble thoughts: the young painter has the candour to disclaim intentions which were certainly not his; but the critic is not a whit disconcerted. What! he cries, you expressed all this unconsciously! and leaves him encouraged and gratified almost in spite of himself. But it is when he deals with Vernet and, above all, with Greuze, that he is most happy. — Here, according to Sainte-Beuve, he is at his best, and so he is in a literary sense, but surely not as a critic. What we admire to-day in Greuze, as Scherer very rightly said, is precisely what Diderot ignored. What he dwelt on sympathetically is precisely what we agree to pass over. Greuze was, perhaps, the first painter to treat his canvas as if it were the stage of a theatre, "that

supreme vice of modern art." But Diderot was not in line with the new criticism of to-day, and where they would have cursed he was never tired of blessing. "I know not," he exclaims, "how I shall ever tear myself away from this sketch"—that for the picture of the ungrateful son—"and still less from its companion."

Over these two scenes, the act of ingratitude in the son who leaves his father and mother in poverty to follow the army, and his return disabled to find the old man in the very throes of death, he hangs enraptured. The charm of expression with which he clothes his thoughts, the grace and fancy of the thoughts themselves, blind one to the defects of his method, but, badly put, what he does in the present instance, and in many another, is to describe with exact and almost unctuous particularity the whole staging of the scene; the position and fashion of the furniture, the dimness of the lighting, the presence of poverty visible in every detail; the grouping of the actors, their actions, their words, even their past history. He has forgotten almost that he is dealing with a mere scrap of paper. He might be, as it was his frequent habit to do, watching a familiar play from the gallery of the theatre with his hands up to his ears, so as to be obliged to rely on action and expression alone for his under-

standing of it. It was his foible when he visited a picture gallery to conceive himself to be a deaf man watching the dumb conversing among themselves on familiar subjects. His ambition and pleasure was to find out what story they had to tell. The deaf take music to be a much more expressive and exact vehicle of thought than it is, except to the most highly imaginative, and Diderot, without being much affected by music himself, accepts the position that it, and indeed every imitative art, has its own alphabet of signs, and in his philosophic musings over the possibilities of expounding in what manner the poet, painter, and musician will severally express the same idea, he forgets, if he ever cared to realize it, that the painter's sole mission is not to make his art a sort of dumb alphabet. "Of all languages none is so difficult, so varying, so complex, so evanescent, as that of paint; and yet it is precisely the works written in this language that everyone believes himself able to understand," but the language to which Mr. Moore refers is not that more obvious one of signs with which Diderot is concerned. It is needless to insist further on this weakness, fundamental as it is. It was one which Diderot shared with nearly all his contemporaries, just as he shared with them the taste for Vernet's "artificially and scientific-

ally composed landscapes." It is difficult to realize that it is this conventional treatment of country scenes which he actually treats in one of his papers as if it were the country itself, so strongly was he impressed by its literal truthfulness; but, after all, it is only to recognize that he was not a couple of generations in advance of his time.

"Sketches," said Diderot, "have commonly a fire which the completed picture lacks. They represent the moment when the fervour and spirit of the artist are as yet unfettered by the results of reflection: the very soul of the painter is diffused over the canvas. The poet's pen and the designer's pencil have alike the air of running a race and revelling in it." How entirely the writer is in sympathy with the picture he calls up, and with what literal significance might the words stand at the head of nearly every page he ever wrote! This is one of the secrets of Diderot's charm: it is the writer himself whose soul is diffused over every sheet he pens: it is his own character which he is employed in making clearer to us in every line, in his reflections, criticisms, and philosophizings. In a nature so impulsive and passionate, so unreflecting if so reasonable, judgment is subordinated to enthusiasm. The charms of virtue touched him, as he says, far more nearly than the deformities of vice. "I

turn my shoulder gently to the bad, and fly to meet the good. If there is in a work, in a character, in a picture or statue one point of beauty, it is that which arrests my eye." Often enough he is betrayed into the expression of sentiments which reflection tells him to be exaggerated; when that is so, he retracts or modifies what he has said with perfect candour. Imagine the possibility of this man regretting that he is what he is! Why should he wish to stifle his sensibility, a quality which, as he explains in the "Paradoxe," is out of place on the stage, but very much in place before the curtain? Rather he loves enthusiasm for itself, and if the price is an occasional retractation, what matter? It has been paid already in the moments of unqualified appreciation which he has enjoyed. The most confirmed patriot among us will admit that his praise of Richardson is out of all reason. After all, "the little printer" was not quite in the same class as Moses, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles. It is exaggeration of course, the record of a passing emotion, but where Diderot gave his heart, he gave it absolutely, unreservedly, almost unreflectingly; nor, so far as Richardson is concerned, do his references to him elsewhere suggest that he was conscious of having given him more than his deserts.

Villemain once said that in Art it is less essential

to correct faults than to develop qualities; and Diderot understood the province of criticism to be the encouragement of effort rather than the castigation of faults. In nature the growth of the grass is the death-warrant of the weeds, and in art the good qualities will grow in the decay of the bad. Enthusiasm and judgment in their due proportion are the stock in trade of the critic and of the artist alike. "If I had to paint the portrait of imagination, I should represent her plucking the feathers off Pegasus and teaching him to submit to Academic rules." "There is one fortunate moment, and one only, when there is vigour and liberty enough to be enthusiastic, and sufficient judgment and taste to be wise." As he held the balance between Nature and the antique, so he tempers enthusiasm with judgment, and academic precision with that liberty which is the birthright of Genius.

To say that Diderot's times were not our times is a platitude, but Sainte-Beuve, when he criticized so sharply the touches of sensuality with which the Salons are needlessly bespattered, forgot how consistently the standard of outward morality has been rising ever since. Diderot was sensual as he was passionate, and had not the motives which we have to conceal the fact, at the same time his actual criticism errs, as has been justly pointed

out, on the side of spirituality. The idea, or, more accurately perhaps, the action, is to him everything. What a dull thing a piece of good drawing and good painting is! he exclaims, and so it may well be, but it is certain that he did not credit colour with that power in the expression of an idea which belongs to it; it was a language he did not understand. It is true that in one passage he compares colour in painting to style in literature, and speaks of them as precious qualities, but elsewhere he says, in an airy way, that anyone can judge of colour, though it takes a good artist to be a good judge of drawing, and moreover when he does not ignore it, his treatment of it is inefficient and superficial. If we allow that the colour sense is less dependent on training and experience, Diderot's dictum is still its own most signal refutation. Here his want of practical acquaintance with his subject leads him astray, but it is this same lack of technical knowledge which is his best passport to our consideration. In speaking of Saunderson, a blind mathematician of exceptional gifts, who about that time had been lecturing at Cambridge, he points out what an advantage he had over the ordinary lecturer in speaking, blind himself, to a seeing audience, because he was able, or was obliged, to illustrate his meaning by metaphors depending on and

arising out of his infirmity, and therefore fresh to his audience and charged with a double measure of enlightenment. Is not something of this true of his own criticism? He lacked the definiteness which belongs to a painter-critic, but he excelled him in suggestiveness. His knowledge more than atoned for its want of depth by the magnitude of its range: the novelty and variety of the point of view taught something even to the experts among his audience; to the world at large, for whom technicalities are shibboleth, he was able to convey his own striking perceptions in the fresh, apposite, and varied analogies which suggested themselves to him.

Take as an instance that which he draws between the disposition of the words and images in a literary picture, and in a painting. His point is that the tendency of a subject to disgust or horrify is more directly due to its treatment, to pieces of wrong emphasis and ill-considered collocations, than to its own inherent qualities, and he illustrates this by a reference to Homer's description of the crows gathered round a corpse, picking out its eyes, and flapping their wings with joy. Is it the same thing to say, "I see the crows flapping their wings with joy around thy corpse and picking out thine eyes"? and, as the poet puts it, "I see the crows gathered round

thy corpse, picking out thine eyes, while they flap their wings with joy"? Is the impression left upon the mind by these two presentments of the same subject identical or even similar? He seizes on the vehicle of expression which is incomparably the most familiar to any audience, and, in their apprehension of the art of the poet, teaches them to see possibilities for the gradation of skill in pictorial treatment unsuspected before, and equips them with a power of discrimination founded on something more solid than mere unreasoning predilection.

Again he says, "We cannot too often urge painters to study the great poets, and poets in their turn to examine the works of great artists." Why, he asks Boucher, why not go to the classics for great ideas? The question shows an utter want of appreciation of the "arch grace and charming fancy" of Boucher's work, but he speaks nothing but the truth when he says that painters will in that way educate their taste and poets be trained to truthfulness. The interdependence of all the spheres of artistic energy, the wisdom of testing one by the other, is always present to him, and the advice which he gives is as much needed to-day as ever. Even Tennyson's noble architectural fantasies suffer from an incoherence and vagueness transcending the pure

glamour of vastness which he desired; they are not only fanciful,—they are incomplete and impracticable.

In the age of the conventional he was the apostle of the real. His sense of congruity was disturbed by the absurd juxtapositions to which painters blindly clung, and by their thoughtless acceptance of precedents which had lost all their reasonableness with the passing away of the manners and customs of which they were the symbol and the outcome. Can we not rise above traditional form, he asks, and are we still to represent St. John the Baptist standing on a piece of wrought stone as he pours the water on the head of Christ, and clad in a sheepskin which has been elaborately cleaned, combed and bleached? Are the hands of the artistic clock to stand permanently at rest? These battle-scenes too, which are evolved from the inner consciousness of the painter, these Homeric duels between rival champions are inexpressibly repugnant to a common sense which has not been blunted by a long course of formal education; the ancient Scandinavians, even, carried their bards with them into the thick of the battle to be the living witnesses of their prowess, "but you, M. Casanove, have you ever been present at a battle? No! well then follow the army. Go and see for yourself

and then paint." It was not till Horace Vernet, far into our own century, freed himself resolutely from the trammels of tradition, that the war piece of Diderot's aspirations had its birth. Let it be always remembered to his credit that the substitution of the real for the imaginary which he pleaded for was still regarded in the light of a revolution two or three generations later.

The discussion of Diderot's art-criticisms naturally leads up to the question, Have they, after all, any real value as such? And the answer must be that, so far as we are concerned, the value is historical and literary, but nothing more. Rightly or wrongly, and we must believe that it is rightly, we have come to regard painting from another point of view; for us the subtle, the suggestive, and the poetical occupy that place which the obvious, not to say the stagey, had for Diderot. We hope we follow the critics of our day when they show us how a colour scheme is carried through a picture, how the painter expresses his individuality, how he ennobles the meanest scene by a treatment which is the echo of his own temperament; at least we have lost our keenness to scent out a moral lesson in every stroke of the brush, our ambition to find the stage of the Adelphi reflected on every canvas. But we may still agree with Sainte-

Beuve that, if Diderot's object was to bring the men and women of his day to some appreciation of the Fine Arts, he went the right way to work. His papers, though they only circulated in manuscript and among a select few, did more than a little to leaven the lump of contemporary indifference and misunderstanding. Those who were fortunate enough to read them testified over and over again to the enlightenment which it had brought them. Men and women of the most refined taste and keenest perceptions,—M. Suard, Madame Necker,—were eloquent in their appreciativeness. If this was so, it is not for us to pass a harsh judgment on a method the merits or demerits of which for their particular purpose we are far less qualified to appraise.

THE REALITIES OF WAR.

PART I.

COUNT TOLSTOI AND M. VERESTCHAGIN.

IN literature the conventional treatment of war suffered a grievous blow when Addison published his "Campaign." Till then the precedent set in the Homeric poems had been faithfully adhered to. The fortune of the leaders on either side was still held to be the determining factor in the issue of the fight. This was true of Marlborough's day. He himself, indeed, at other times was depicted as a man of thews and sinews cleaving his way through the enemy with a force of arm more than mortal, and winning his victories purely by personal prowess, but Addison's good sense forbade him to drape the figure of his hero with a Roman toga. He gave him to an astonished world as he was, and literary opinion accepted his judgment with acclaim. Half a century later Diderot was urging on French painters of battle-pieces a more realistic treatment of their subject.

The sworn foe of conventionalism in every form, careless of art till he was able to bring his mature judgment to its consideration, he naturally had an advantage over those whose early training had made the worship of precedent a second nature to them. He was conscious of absurdities which had no foundation whatever in artistic necessity, sins against common-sense which the most bigoted of the painters themselves would not have tolerated in any other connection, but, persistently as he preached the new creed, converts were few and insignificant.

It remained for Horace Vernet in our own century to put his doctrines into effect. Meantime the first Napoleon by the force of his genius had brought Europe to her knees, but even so stupendous an object lesson as this had been allowed to go unheeded. The figure of conventionality had passed unshattered through the storm of war, and stood unmoved till Vernet laid a sacrilegious hand on it and sent it hurtling from its pedestal.

The taking of Constantine is a picture which is familiar to many of the visitors to Versailles. Its merits are obvious, quite apart from its special and particular virtue as the first effort, and much more than a mere effort, to exchange tradition for reality. Regarded in this light it is

nothing less than the inauguration of a new era, and to Vernet is due some of the glory which is the lot of those who, like André Chénier and Balzac, direct instead of reflecting contemporary taste, pioneers of thought, with whom the generation which succeeds them is in more real sympathy than their own.

The realism of half a century since, however, dealt with its material in a way which has little in common with the drastic methods of the modern school. It has been objected to Vernet that he saw only one side of his subject. His battle-scenes are full of the intoxication of noise and movement, of surging cavalry, helmets gleaming, standards waving, and shrill clarion notes; they are so many "bulletins de victoire," but there is no suggestion of the long miseries of war, or even of its real sacrifices and heroisms.

But to ask for this is to ask for a great deal; no man could pass at once from the battle-piece of the drawing-room to that of the shambles, and, after all, those who flout him are his lineal descendants. The movement has been one and unbroken from that time to this. What he put aside almost with courtesy, the apostle of modern Realism crushes under an iron heel. It is a question of degree, but not of principle.

It is worth while to recall the scheme of this

the prototype of the modern battle-piece. The centre of interest is General Vaillant who, seated with his back to the action, watch in hand, counts the moments till a new order shall be due. His plan is matured, and his whole mind is intent on delivering his blow to the minute. He is the representative of the modern war-spirit, the embodiment of the forethought, calculation and resourcefulness which are a commander's essentials. The whole plan of action—the succession of storming parties rolling on to the town like a flowing tide—is given with a graphic clearness which could never have been attained had the painter contented himself with treating his general in the ordinary way as a combatant with bare sword and uplifted arm, nor should we then have had the contrast, so truly valuable, between the calm of the master-mind and the excited action of the subordinates.

It is a far cry from Vernet to Verestchagin, but it is with Verestchagin we have to deal, in treating of the modern war picture, as the most characteristic representative of the new school. So far he has spoken realism's last word on canvas, as his fellow-countryman, Tolstoi, on paper. In the work of these two men, whose subjects are often closely analogous, the weird Russian temperament, visionary, melancholy, sardonic, and

tinged with a strange fatalism, is a constant factor. In common with many of their compatriots they gaze on life's saddest side, and if they look for compensations it is with the opera-glass reversed.

Verestchagin must be judged by such of his pictures as were exhibited here eight years ago. Among them were some ten or twelve great military pieces, and a few others such as "Crucifixion by the Romans," "Blowing prisoners from the guns in British India," and "Hanging in Russia," which may be classed with them as illustrating the same spirit and the same method in the painter. In nearly every one there is an undercurrent of political feeling, the expression of a deep pity for the misery and impotence of the poor man, peasant or soldier, the fly in the wheel of Autocracy. The scenes which one sees here, so represented, make it clear how and why Nihilism was born, lives, and is incapable of death so long as autocracy survives. A picture like the triptych, "All quiet at Shipka,"—three stages in the death of a man on outpost duty, bitten by frost, overcome by drowsiness, buried in the drift, is rather a piece of political propagandism, though perhaps not consciously so, than a work of art.

For art the subject is too purely terrible. It is,

indeed, a tremendous appeal to pity for the uncomplaining common soldier, an indictment of the system which lets the poor man's lot be what it is. The same may be said of another subject which is similarly treated in a series of three pictures—"The forgotten Soldier"—the dying man lying on the Indian uplands while the bird of prey wheels overhead, the battle for the victim, and in the last the bleached bones in utter solitude. The insignificance of the unit which goes to make the great piece of mechanism called an army is constantly being urged. It wants more than the loss of a tiny bolt to throw it out of gear; the bolt drops out useless, discarded and forgotten.

With Tolstoi, as with Verestchagin, Art is not an end in itself. It is a vehicle delightful in its use to the master-hand, but generally subservient to the gospel of humanity which it preaches. A stern and even exaggerated realism is the necessary corollary of such a view of its functions. The more purely terrible a subject is, the more beautiful it is in a sense, "Le laid est le beau"; with the painter as with the novelist the theatrical is lost in the actual, the scenic accessories of conventional war, with its artificial smoke and flame, its flashing swords and rolling drums have no place in their works. "As he turned he saw a[1]

[1] "Sebastopol," May, 1855.

sudden flash of light: 'Mortar,' cried the look-out, and one of the soldiers who was following added 'It's coming straight at the bastion.' Mikhailoff looked up, the bomb, like a point of fire, seemed at its zenith, at the very moment when to decide what course it was going to take was impossible: for an instant it seemed to stop; suddenly, at redoubled speed, the projectile approached them; already the flying sparks were visible, and the mournful hissing could be clearly heard. 'Down!' cried a voice."

There is a calm and terrible truthfulness about this, which tells us that the words are those of an eye-witness, the vivid memory of a not-to-be-forgotten horror. Do we recall the typical war scenes of fiction, the brilliant charge, the flying enemy, a looted town, a joyous carousal? The testimony of those most nearly concerned gives little warrant for such a treatment of the subject. Put yourself under the guidance of Tolstoi or Verestchagin, and they will show you the naked reality—a moment of fierce joy in a mêlée, a few minutes of relief when the shadow of the destroying angel has passed away, the consciousness of duty done. This is the wage, and, for service, long days of harassing and wearing suspense, weeks of famine and sickness and cold, and the nameless horrors attendant even on the most splendid victory. A

striking contrast is drawn in the picture entitled "Skobelef at Shipka." The general is represented galloping down the line the day after the success at Shipka. The men are full of enthusiasm as he thanks them in the name of the Czar; caps are thrown in the air, and hands waved amid repeated cheers. All kept holiday for the time, we are told, except the slain of the previous day, who litter the ground which lies between the soldiery and the vanquished forts. Amid much that was impressive in the exhibition, perhaps nothing was more so than the Russian painter-soldier's representation of a field hospital on the day after the third attempt on Plevna—a thing imagination could not have conceived—thousands waiting their turn in a merciless rain, thirteen thousand passing through hospitals where accommodation had been provided for three, each one impatient to feel the knife, hoping against hope to see his name entered in the book; for to be passed over is to receive a death-warrant. What does Verestchagin say about this assault? "The day was cloudy and a fine rain fell, soaking the clayey soil and making it impossible to walk, much less to storm the heights. I remember the Commander-in-chief exclaiming, as he clasped his forehead with both hands, 'How will our men advance? How can they march in such

mire?' The attack nevertheless was not postponed, as it was the Emperor's birthday." Such pictures as this, and the companion one of the troops lying on the dripping ground before the assault, are revelations. To have studied them carefully is to have been through a mimic campaign, to have felt for a moment almost what the actors in the tragedy felt themselves. Compare with this scene what Tolstoi says of the hospitals at Sebastopol—the great room, dark and lofty, dimly lit by some three or four candles which the doctors carry as they pass from one to another among the wounded; the pools of blood, the rapid and fevered breathing of hundreds of men, the heavy and reeking atmosphere, the surgeons with sleeves turned up, probing the wounds, a major seated at a table apart taking down names and numbers: "Perforatio pectoris; Sebastian Séréda, footsoldier . . . what regiment? but no matter, don't enter his name; 'Moritur'; take him away . . . . The others waited in silence, and from time to time a deep sigh escaped them as they gazed on this picture."[1]

"There, in the hospital," cries Tolstoi, "you will see scenes which frighten you, which pierce your heart. There you will see war without the brilliant marshalling of troops in line, without

[1] "Sebastopol," May, 1855.

music, without the rolling of drums, without the flapping standard, without the general on his mettlesome steed. There you will see it in its reality, in blood, in sufferings, and in death."[1]

Much of M. Verestchagin's letterpress is as mournfully eloquent of the miseries of a winter campaign as the canvases themselves. His narrative of the march of the defenders of Plevna from the captured town to the Danube bears the stamp of truth unadorned, and is tragic in its simplicity. By ones and twos the unhappy prisoners, too weak to resist the bittter frost, kept dropping down all along the route, moving at first their arms and legs, then only their eyes and lips, and passing from rigidity to welcome death. At every halt, hundreds were left behind to perish. There was no one to remove the bodies, so that "passing carts and gun-carriages crushed them into the snow, and made it impossible to extricate them without spoiling the road." There were some two or three pictures illustrative of this fatal journey, but it is a relief to turn from them to the last of the group which composes the war panorama, in which a tender chord is struck. On the border of a grassy expanse, dotted over with a number of freshly-made mounds, under the canopy of a wide sweep of sky, stands a long-haired priest

[1] "Sebastopol, December, 1854."

of the Greek Church who, robed in a dark vestment and with one soldier attendant, swings his censer, while he repeats the burial service over those who have lately fallen. Here, at least, amid the turmoil of armed strife, is a sanctuary where the spirit of peace broods undisturbed.

So far M. Verestchagin. He has portrayed for us with a realism which bites and burns like ice, with a stern unbending truthfulness through which glow the strong emotions, and with consummate skill, the true aspects of a campaign, its short-lived and feverish joys, its sorrows long-drawn out. He has handled the subject with an earnestness and obviousness of purpose which stand almost alone in modern painting. So far as analysis is possible with the vehicle at his disposal he has analyzed for us the nature of warfare, its elements and their relative importance, but the conditions of his art impose a limit short of that which is possible to the man who paints, not with pigments but with words. If we want an analysis other than a superficial one, of the actors in the drama, of their emotions, of their scope and limitations; if we want to see how our common nature bears the test of winnowing and sifting by a life of peril, by opportunities for self-abnegation and unselfishness, we must turn to the novelist whose broad narrative is embroidered

with an infinity of detail which, whether entirely convincing or not, shows an admirably clear insight into human nature, a large grasp of the forces which war lets loose, and a full sense of the impotence of the individual to shape events. Perhaps there never was a campaign in which the elements so completely claimed mastery over man, except in so far as he was able to make them serve his purpose, as Napoleon's invasion of Russia. The consciousness of this colours all Count Tolstoi's "Peace and War," and, perhaps, at times leads him into something like paradox. With all this, however, his story is told with a vividness which disarms criticism. We might search literature for a long time without finding a more graphic piece of work than the account of the battle of Borodino. Not only do Napoleon and Koutousow stand before us in flesh and blood, the one, after fifteen years of victory, about to teach his troops the possibility of reverse; the other—the old bowed, heavy-shouldered man—dozing at the Council of War and even at the crisis of the battle, but illumined by a keen insight into the possibilities of the situation and daring, like Fabius of old, to be the "Cunctator," the waiter on events, in spite of unpopularity and the hardly concealed sneers of his subordinates and even of his fellows. Not only does Count

Tolstoi make their personalities stand out with the distinctness of silhouettes, but he conveys in a masterly way all the doubtful swayings to and fro of the grappling armies, the ebb and flow of the French attack, the blind impulse with which the troops hurl themselves again and again on the Russian positions, only to be driven back in confusion, to re-form from mere force of discipline, and to attack again.

Napoleon, on high ground a mile away, standing in a glaring sun and shading his eyes with his hand, sees his troops disappear down the incline into clouds of smoke, and knows no more. As fast as they go, they are swallowed up, as though by some vast Minotaur, and more are called for. He grants them, with reluctance, and after refusal. These in their turn disappear, and still aides-de-camp come riding up incessantly in hottest haste to beg him to grant reinforcements yet again.

It was not so at Lodi or Arcola, at Austerlitz or Friedland; no one comes now as they came then, to announce the capture of whole corps, dragging the enemy's cannon and trailing the standards to his feet, begging for cavalry to hurl on the baggage train, not, as now, to feed the devouring guns. In the midst of his reverses he becomes conscious that his moral defeat is even now assured. He is a gambler, and the troops are his counters, but

he will not risk more; an accident might undo the prestige of a score of victories which is already weakened. Koutousow is equally far from the scene of action, confused and undecided, commanding and countermanding, accepting suggestions and asking advice, but sensible, in a general way, that the troops are holding their own, and gathering confidence from the expressions of those who come in from the front. He sits down and tries mechanically to eat some food. At this moment comes a certain Woltzogen to tell the "old gentleman," for whom he has a lofty contempt, that the principal points of their position are in the hands of the enemy. "Koutousow left off eating and looked at him with surprise; he hardly seemed to understand what it was he had heard. Woltzogen noticed his emotion, and added with a smile, 'I think it would be less than right to conceal from your Highness what I have seen; the troops are routed and flying.' 'You saw that, you saw that,' said Koutousow, rising alertly with knitted brows, and making menacing gestures with his trembling hands, 'How dare you say that to me, sir?' he cried, gasping for breath. 'You know nothing. Tell your General that the news is false, that I know the true state of things better than he does; go and repeat to General Barclay that it is my intention to attack

to-morrow.' All were silent, and nothing was heard but the laboured breathing of the old man. 'The enemy is repulsed along the whole line. I thank God for it, and our brave soldiers. The victory is ours, and to-morrow we will drive him from the sacred soil of Russia.' He signed himself, and as he did so uttered a sob. Woltzogen shrugged his shoulders, and, with a sarcastic smile on his lips, moved away without attempting to conceal the surprise which the blind obstinacy of the 'old gentleman' caused him."[1]

There are not a few life-like little sketches interspersed among the larger movements of the narrative which bring home to one, with great force, the blind confusion which reigned where the troops were fighting hand to hand in the smoke. How characteristic is the whole episode of Pierre Bézoukhow's half-panic, half-heroic, participation in the battle. A civilian among soldiers, seeking his baptism of fire in the very thickest of the stubborn fight, his brain whirls with excitement; he dares not stop to think, but longs to turn his strength to some account; he flies from the entrenchment to carry out an order which has been given to a soldier; he is thrown down and stunned by an explosion; when he regains consciousness he makes all speed back to the battery

[1] "Peace and War," vol. iii.

in a paroxysm of terror. The colonel is still leaning over the parapet, but the faces of the soldiers are strange to him. A man in a deep blue uniform approaches him, sword in hand. He has fallen among the French troops, he realizes it in a moment, and knows, too, that the colonel is dead. The French officer drops his sword and they seize each other. "'Is he my prisoner or am I his?' was the thought that passed through the minds of both. The French officer began to incline to the latter supposition, as he felt Pierre's muscular grasp ever tightening on his throat."[1]

A bullet whistles by; the Frenchman drops to avoid it, and Pierre runs into the arms of his own friends as they once more get the upper hand.

Such a state of mind as that of Pierre Bézoukhow, one of almost hysterical excitement, and as far removed from cowardice as from indifference to danger, is a favourite subject of study with Count Tolstoi. Of the existence of pure physical or animal courage—the courage of the half developed nature, or blunted sensibilities, which was so common and so admired an attribute in the War Romances of our youth—he is almost incredulous; or it may be that he merely passes it over

[1] "Peace and War," vol. iii.

as offering no material for analysis. When he introduces anything of the sort it is due to lengthened experience and possibly long immunity from harm, or, as in the case of Melnikoff, the soldier in "Sebastopol," who sat by preference in the open ground where the shells were falling, to a settled conviction—possible in the Russian who is a confirmed fatalist—that death will not come by shot or shell. The list might be completed by adding those to whom life offers no attractions, such as the soldier of Antigonus, of whom we read in Plutarch, who displayed such astonishing courage till he was cured of the infirmity which made life odious to him, when he ceased to court danger or to risk his person any more than his fellows.

Count Tolstoi lays it down almost as an axiom that courage is in a great measure due to *amour propre*, and he does so regretfully. His meaning apparently is, that the constraint which a sensitive young man exercises with infinite difficulty, when he is almost drawn out of himself by strange terrors, is due to the feeling that, even if the eyes of others are not on him, those of his second self are at least on the watch. The lower and grosser nature in each and everyone will strive for the mastery, and must be battled bown. At moments the young soldier gives way, bursts into tears,

looks yearningly for shelter, and accuses himself of cowardice; but even as he does so he is conscious that the epithet is undeserved, and that he would let no one else so much as breathe it. When he finds himself actually in front of the enemy, he feels, as Nicholas Rostow did, "that great and unspeakable joy in the imminence of the attack of which his comrades had so often told him; 'Ah! if it could but come more quickly, more quickly,'"[1] he murmurs. Such a man soon ceases to "bow" to every shell, as though it were "an old acquaintance," but he is none the less afraid of them, for they represent to him the possible extinction of what is pleasant to him above all things—life. Few there are, who, like "Junker Vlang,"[2] are so unstrung that they can make no effort of self-restraint, and even he, if he had a womanly horror of physical ills, had a love like that of woman for the young Volodia Kozeltzoff which, at the last, steeled his heart, and gave a more than natural strength to his arm. Perhaps the most complete study, as it is certainly the most pathetic, is that of the young Kozeltzoff himself. He is a mere boy, fresh from a military school, eager for glory and advancement, and full of patriotic enthusiasm. We are introduced to

[1] "Peace and War," vol. i.
[2] "Sebastopol," August, 1855.

him at a wayside inn some few hours out of Sebastopol, where he is found by his elder brother, who has been absent wounded, and is on his way to rejoin his own regiment.

Michel, the elder, is for going on at once. "Well, you had better get your things together," he said, "and we will start;" the younger brother reddened and look confused, "For Sebastopol at once?" he asked at length. . . . "To go straight there," he thinks, "to expose myself to bombs! it is terrible. After all, does it matter whether I go to-day or later? at any rate I have my brother."[1] The idea of danger had not so much as occurred to him before. Arrived in Sebastopol, he is buoyed up by a sense of his importance as one of the defenders of a town on which the eyes of the world are fixed. He and his brother have to go their different ways, and he puts himself under the guidance of a soldier-servant. They arrive at the open ground between the town and the fortifications, and the servant, having pointed out the position of the battery to him, goes back. Kozeltzoff, alone for the first time, with the shells whistling over his head, in the chilly dusk, feels a sinking at his heart. "The sensation of being abandoned in the face of danger, in the face of death, as he believed, weighed on his heart with

[1] "Sebastopol," August, 1855.

the icy coldness of stone; he looked about him to see if he was observed, and taking his head between his hands, murmured in a voice which was broken by fright, 'My God! it is true that I am a despicable coward, a craven! and, but a little while since I dreamed of dying for my country, for the Czar, and gloried in it.'" That night he had little sleep; the whizzing of the shells overhead was incessant, every moment he expected the house would be struck by one of them, or that the enemy would break into it; the measured tread of the colonel as he paced to and fro in the room above comforted him but little. He welcomed the morning with rapture; the day is spent with his brother-officers whose kindness is reassuring, and in the evening it devolves upon him to go with a small company of soldiers to serve some mortars in a redoubt on the Malakoff. The acute stage of fright has passed; the consciousness that others are nervous serves to make him the more firm. Every hour of a long night of inaction finds him more at his ease. The next morning he and his men are summoned to the battery. Once at work, all trace of terror is gone. A hot cannonade is kept up on both sides. In his excitement he mounts gaily on the ramparts as he gives his orders. The captain, who has been eight months on the bastion, and has little

enthusiasm left in him, smiles, in spite of himself, at the bright and fearless boy. Enough, however; with the touching scene of Volodias' death at the taking of the Malakoff we are not concerned. Count Tolstoi's narrative, so far briefly outlined, has shown us the stages through which every human being must pass when he first comes under fire. The ordeal may be successfully met, or may not; but it can never, under ordinary circumstances, be avoided.

Amid the almost tragic character sketches which abound in these pages, there is much that is in a lighter vein. What more artless, more convincingly natural than the cry of Rostow's friends, when they meet after their first brush with the French? "Count, Count," cried Berg, showing him his hand wrapped up in a bloodstained pocket-handkerchief, "I was wounded in the hand, but I kept my place in the ranks; look, Count! I am obliged to hold my sword in my left hand."[1]

A review of Count Tolstoi's work in the field of realism would be incomplete without a reference to his treatment of the soldier's death, and the effect on the man of a conviction of its near approach. His view on this part of the subject, so far as can be gathered—and the death of the elder Kozeltzoff

[1] "Peace and War," vol. i.

is much to the point—is that the consciousness of duty done, of death braved in a good cause, exalts an apparently mean character out of itself, and gives it a nobility and an unselfishness before unknown to it. So it was with Kozeltzoff, a man at whose hands one would not have looked for self-sacrifice, but who, when it was exacted of him, was happy that it should be so.

But the most striking death-scene, however artistically indefensible the rude grasp which the novelist lays on so airy and fleeting a gossamer as a man's reflections in the instant of dissolution: "Aut fuit, aut veniet, nihil est præsentis in illâ;" quotes Montaigne—is that of Praskoukin. The narrative which immediately precedes this episode has already been quoted. Mikhailoff and Praskoukin are together when the bomb is seen coming directly at them. "Down!" cries a voice, and they fall to the earth as the bomb strikes the ground somewhere near them. It is from this point that Praskoukin's reflections are given us, the fruit of the brief moment between the falling and the bursting of the messenger of death. The strange medley of thought and fancies, forgotten memories of trivial incidents recurring and mixed up with the awful dread of the moment and with calculations as to the chance of his being hit, and of the expediency of having chloroform if an operation becomes

necessary. All this is told in a masterly way. The bomb explodes, a red glare burns in his eyes, and he is conscious of receiving a terrible blow in his chest. He rises to his feet, staggers and falls. "God be praised, I am only bruised," he thinks. He seems to see soldiers coming, and fears that they will trample on him. His hands and feet are as though bound; he tries to say, "Lift me," but instead of the words, comes a groan so terrible that it strikes him with horror; a moment and he is dead, killed almost on the instant by a shell received full in the chest.

Such is war, in the words of one who has fought, and the impression left by the novelist is at one with the effect of the painter's handiwork. If it is sombre, it is because war, in its essence, is sombre, however brilliant the interludes. If the narrative does not deal in heroics, it is because it has to do with flesh and blood, with humanity, not with the creatures of fancy. Count Tolstoi searches out human nature with infinite discrimination and acumen. He states the case for and against it with judicial clearness and impartiality, and human nature, as he represents it to us, needs no apologist. He tells us, indeed, that the men he has depicted are no heroes in either sense of the word, but as to the spirit in which he approaches his work, let him speak for himself.

"The hero of my story, the object of my devoted affection, reproduced, so far as it was in me to do so, in all its beauty, beautiful yesterday, to-day, and always—is the Truth."

THE REALITIES OF WAR.

PART II.

M. *Zola*.

THE throne from which Count Tolstoi voluntarily stepped down to preach the gospel of humanity, to alleviate the sufferings and redress the wrongs with which his pen had long familiarized his readers, is no longer vacant, and the war romance has passed into another, but not a better, phase. Count Tolstoi turned his face from the breezy, light-hearted aspect of his subject to show us the gloom and the poignancy of the reverse. He put the key of the charnel-house into our hands; M. *Z*ola has thrown the door wide open, but whereas Tolstoi was subtle, M. *Z*ola is only minute, when the first dealt in analysis, the second does not go beyond infinite division. To pass from the Russian to the Frenchman is to leave the heroics of Realism for a Naturalism in which the scrupulous littleness, the wealth of insignificant documentary garbage,

is, on a first acquaintance, the most salient feature. It is, in the words of M. Zola's chief critic, to pass from Jordan to the Dead Sea, from the water of sweet savour to that which is like ashes in the mouth. Degradation has been M. Zola's constant theme, whether in the workman, in the peasant, in the official, or, as in the present instance, in the soldier, and, indeed, in the whole military machine. "La Débâcle," however, is a complex work, and no mere chronicle of miseries for their own sake. It is at once historical and didactic, as well as being the vehicle for Naturalism; its motive the completion of a long series through all of which has pierced the desire to make things better, however unfortunate the method may be thought, with a picture of decay and disorganization, of blind trust in fortune, of irresponsible ministers and drawing-room generals, which should be startling enough to give a new impulse to the wheel of reform. Its Naturalism is of that minute and photographic kind which M. Zola lavishes as though he followed his subject with a detective camera, and, perhaps, open to objection in that particular which forbids the instantaneous photograph of movement to be a real work of art, in the want of proportion which marks it, in the permanence which it gives to the fleeting, the prominence which it confers on the

ineffably insignificant. Its history an unanswerable contrast between the belligerents, between order and chaos, forethought and haphazard, a contrast the completeness of which has, however, been challenged, as we shall see; a summary of the events which led to the crowning disaster at Sedan, comprehensive and intelligible in a high degree.

Whenever M. Zola puts pen to paper two things may always be confidently predicted of his work; first, the unwearying attention given to small detail; and, secondly, the profusion of sordid matter with which he smirches his page, the Tantalean dishes which his guests must stomach if they put their knees under his board. One has a sort of prejudice against this mechanical piling up of facts as a groundwork for a novel. Let us have something spontaneous, we ask, even if chapter and verse cannot be given for it. Imaginative power is not a common characteristic of Dryasdust, nor does his occupation tend to stimulate it; but M. Zola does not allow his documents to overweight him or make him tedious. They may be revolting, but they are seldom dull. In "La Débâcle," indeed, their matter is for the most part picturesque and, for their writer, unobjectionable. The moral squalor to which we are introduced is hideous enough, but it has its pur-

pose in the great scheme of contrast which is the subject of the book. This becomes more real to one after it has been read and digested. What happens with the picture, which is full of exhaustively painted detail, is just reversed in the literary picture. To look into the canvas is to see a wealth of beautiful form and colour which seem to leave nothing to be desired, but to step back is to become gradually conscious of blurring, of confusion, or, at least, of a want of prominence in the main motive. But in the literary masterpiece, when you view it as a whole, you will realize that a fitting hierarchy is there. The detail takes its proper place, the grossness becomes a foil to something better on which the memory lingers. In a word, you find that M. Zola knows his art better than you do, and has fortified your understanding of the working of the story with a harvest of suggestion abundant indeed, but not excessive.

Like Tolstoi, M. Zola stands midway between the amateur, who evolves a semblance of war from his inner consciousness, and the soldier, who has become so thoroughly habituated to the nature of his surroundings that his narrative is either little more than a dry and sober catalogue of carnage, or carries one so briskly from one bloody field to another, touches so lightly on hair-

breadth escape and perilous venture that the reader finds himself viewing the scene with something of a veteran's phlegm.

There could be no better instance of the latter than the "Memoirs" of the Baron de Marbot, whose style is so airy and graceful, who bore himself with so much natural gaiety, who was so little concerned to make us view things with a profounder emotion than he did himself, that even such episodes as those in which his she-devil of a charger played a chief part excite rather than scare us.

But with M. Zola it is as different as possible. He seems to say, with the fat boy in "Pickwick," "I wants to make yer flesh creep." His point of view is always that of the man who is new to his work, who is receiving his baptism of fire. The impressions are of that vivid and possibly exaggerated kind which one sanguinary battle-field will destroy for good, and there is an air of exact reality about the whole, the result of countless significant details, which puts the finishing touch to the reader's sympathetic horror. The professedly imaginative battle-scene is, in the nature of things, powerless to produce an effect like this.

"La Débâcle" is a book without a hero, it has been said, a subject-picture in which all the figures are secondary, and it is true that there is

no single character study which stands out by itself; but what purpose, we may ask, would such a figure serve except to draw a red herring across the trail, and divert the attention from the real centre of interest? The book is one which deals with forces, not with individuals, and its veritable hero is that great machine moving relentlessly on, and grinding opposition to powder under its stupendous bulk, the German Army. It would be difficult to put the finger on a more impressive piece of word-painting—as well sustained as its inspiration was happy—than that in which M. Zola shows us the French driven or cajoled—who shall say which?—into the meshes of the vast net which had been spread for them.

Our own immediate concern is with the 106th Regiment of the Line, which, when the story opens, lay at Mulhouse. The enthusiasm raised by the phantom of success at Sarrebrück had hardly been dashed by the crushing reverse at Wissembourg; the men had at least displayed all the traditional gallantry against heavy odds, and it yet remained to be discovered that the strategy of their opponents would invariably place them in the same position. A rumour runs that MacMahon has gained a great victory, that the enemy is in full flight, and the King of Prussia captive; but in the small hours of the night the camp awakes

to learn the disaster at Woerth. It is but one short step from confidence to dismay, distrust, almost disaffection. The march to Belfort is that of a routed army; discipline and self-respect are alike forgotten. In Chouteau, who was the first to throw away his knapsack and rifle, as a few days later he threw away the rice on which the others in his squad were dependent for food, we have a type of the man of the faubourgs, the third-rate mob orator, stuffed with half-understood revolutionary tags, devoid of the smallest shred of patriotism, a prey to the grossest selfishness, cowardly and sensual, exclaiming at every moment that their generals are betraying them, and convicting himself by his very suspicions, real or assumed, of entire willingness to do the same himself. The scenes in which he is ringleader remind one of nothing so much as a page out of Tacitus. In these men, with their flighty passions, full one moment of enthusiasm, savagely suspicious the next, the prætorians of Otho and Vitellius seem to live again.

From this moment all freedom of movement is paralyzed by fatal indecision in the highest quarters. Arrived at Belfort, a rabble of beaten men whose knapsacks and rifles have been picked up and brought after them, the 106th is at last entrained. Their destination is doubtful—either

Reims or Paris. A mistake which has resulted in serving out large quantities of brandy in place of other rations makes the men fiercely indifferent. Who is this Emperor who makes men fight, though they have got no quarrel? The spirit of mutiny is hardly kept within bounds. At Reims, however, the troops leave the train and join the camp outside the town. Discussion grows rife with inaction. Every private knows perfectly well that the return to Paris to await the Germans under the walls—a course which recommends itself to many—has been made practically impossible by the attitude of the Paris mob.

At least the delay has its uses, and when the army of Châlons starts to join hands with Bazaine, it is like a giant refreshed. For the moment all is good-humour; the men are well fed; the marching is easy, but all the elements of ill-feeling are still there. At Reims Generals have been constantly insulted, the Emperor ignored, and insubordination has only yielded to a temporary sense of well-being. Soon the country becomes desolate and the troops have to struggle along cross roads; the certainty of purpose which made new men of the soldiery is all lost after the second day. The Commissariat train is gone adrift, and we have a sight of General Bourgain-Desfeuilles through the open door of a farm-house, seated at

a table with an omelette and chicken before him, while the troops are gnawing raw turnips, and many of the officers are actually without food. In this man M. Zola has summed up all that was worst in the officers of the Empire. Many of them were soldiers only in name, carpet-knights to whom personal considerations were all in all; Bourgain-Desfeuilles regards the war simply as a ladder to promotion, and he groans at every rung of it; of duty he has no conception; it is enough that he has to put up with bad beds and worse fare, and even this comes in the light of a personal grievance to him. The Intelligence Department was pitiably inadequate, maps of any kind were at a discount, knowledge of the country there was none; Bourgain-Desfeuilles hardly cares to distinguish between Meuse and Moselle; he shuts his ears to the names of villages, "How the devil is a man to fight in a country he doesn't know?" he exclaims. Warmed with "grogs," he descants on the future movements of the army with an absolute disregard of his company. As a natural result his information is carried direct to the Germans,—perhaps he never realized the blunder, but had he done so, it would probably have found him indifferent.

A companion picture—that of Lieutenant Rochas, which has something pathetic in it, as

of a man who had wandered away to some Kaatskill after Solferino, and had woken to find himself in a world which was all upside down, and engaged in a struggle in which the enemy did not observe the time-honoured rules of the game—is a faithful rendering of the soldier, enduring rather than resourceful, who won the first Napoleon's battles for him. Carrying his knapsack through the Crimea, he had, after eighteen years' hard service, risen to the rank of Lieutenant with no prospect of further advancement owing to his want of education. His confidence in the French soldier and himself is supreme. He is the "Chauvin" of Daudet's sketch. He bears privation without a murmur; each reverse simply means a longer bill run up against the Germans, payment for which will be surely exacted. Nothing short of a cataclysm will avail to open his eyes. He is in fact a pure fossil, out of place in a new order of things, and unable to realize them, or to accommodate himself to them.

The enlightened forecast of the future is, characteristically enough, put into the mouth of a civilian—Weiss. Weiss is an Alsatian, who has mixed much with the Germans, and has seen something of their activity, and of their high state of preparedness. He has seen too, with unavailing regrets, a fortnight wasted by the French,

during which information has been sedulously gathered by the enemy's horse, maps verified, telegraph wires cut, villages harried. He has watched Prussia going on from strength to strength, the conqueror at Sadowa spoiling for fresh laurels, a great power in process of formation, endued with all the fire and enthusiasm of youth, and, on the other hand, he sees an Empire of specious exterior indeed, but rotten at the core; a soldiery of admirable bravery sacrificed to routine; a body of officers uninterested and unprogressive, an Emperor at their head, ill in body and mind, at once deceiving and deceived, planted there on the horns of a fatal dilemma.

So M. Zola, using Weiss as his mouth-piece, sums up the situation, and his representative soldier has no reply but a superb gesture of disdain. Has not he, Rochas, seen a handful of his fellow-soldiers in Algeria make good their ground against almost impossible odds? "I tell you," he cries, "if the Prussians dare to come, we will kick them back to Berlin, kick them back, I say."

Meantime the shadow over the devoted army grows darker: the men are marched and countermarched so aimlessly that after three days' hard work only two leagues had been covered. When it is at length decided to abandon Bazaine and

make for the strong places in the North, a sigh of relief goes up from the tired ranks, but, while men are still talking, comes an imperative mandate from Paris. The army must advance, it appears, or there will be a revolution, and so it comes about that a movement is begun which would have been rash four days earlier, just possible perhaps two days before under the direction of a leader of supreme ability, at the moment of undertaking it a piece of insanity, the certain sacrifice of hecatombs of human victims. "The miserable army was beginning the ascent of its Calvary." The cannons of the enemy are now heard continually as they crush detached bodies. The Uhlans are never out of sight, but always beyond reach. It is like a boxing match in which the unscientific man wastes all his strength in his fruitless attempt to plant a blow on his adversary. Hardly a cartridge is burnt, and what firing there is, is done purely as a relief to the feelings.

There is something mysterious and unmanning in an enemy who works in the dark, and mines away the security from under foot; so the French soldier felt it. His personal valour had become useless to him. His strength was expended in ineffectual beating of the air; and so it comes home to the reader. As M. Zola paints the

picture the advance of the Germans is like the working of some inexorable force of Nature, and when, a few days later, we are in the full clash of arms and roar of ordnance on the field of Sedan, the contrast between the opposing armies is not less skilfully marked. On the one hand we have MacMahon wounded, and the chief command in commission, now in the hands of General Ducrot, who orders a retreat on Mézières when it is already twelve hours too late, and now again in those of General Wimpffen, who is obstinate to advance under a withering fire to certain destruction. Compare this with the attitude of the German Staff, as one sees it with a telescope through a rift in the smoke, calm and confident in the execution of what has been fore-arranged, the Prussian king standing in advance and shading his eyes as he watches the vast chess-board beneath him, where his men hold already an all-commanding position.

It can be no matter of surprise if this book is unpopular in France; M. Zola does not hesitate to cut into the quick flesh, so that he may clear the gangrenous mass away, but is he so unpatriotic as his detractors say? He is no Tyrtæus indeed; he strikes no jubilant chord, chants no inspiring strain. His audience may think him severe, but his attack is directed against the system, not

against the men. Such types as Chouteau and Desfeuilles were the outcome of bad conditions, and are not intended as any measure of the manhood and intelligence of France; and on the other side, we have the glowing record of many deeds of heroism, the just tribute to a nation for whom the triumphs of their arms are a glorious inheritance.

To bring the horrors of war home to one, however, something more is wanted than descriptions of carnage on the field, or even of the miseries of the ambulance waggon and field hospital. All this has its bright side; man, unless he is, like a Chouteau, too contemptible for words, is there at his best; his meaner passions are swept away and forgotten in the supreme moment of battle; springs of generosity, unsuspected before, well out; for a brief minute the most callous puts his country before himself. But M. Zola is not the man to spare us a twinge. His pleasure is to make us remember that there are meannesses and pettinesses which survive the scathing fire of the grandest passions, that there is a world which lives its shallow life unmoved by the storm of emotions, or the shock of arms, so he devises for us scenes in which the little is brought into violent contrast with the great; and selfishness, bending like a reed before the gale, rises again when the gust is passed.

Take for instance that which represents Mdme. Delaherche, the young wife of an elderly husband, coming down almost from the arms of her lover to find the courtyard of the house turned into a hospital, and there to meet the eyes, now glazing in death, which a few hours before had held hers in the spell of passion. One cannot deny a certain dramatic intensity to such a scene as this. But there are many which are without any such redeeming feature. Always prone to greed, and incensed by the loss which a war, undertaken without consulting him, is putting on his shoulders, the French peasant is the central figure of many an unpleasant picture. His patriotism is of that kind which prompts him to prefer making a good bargain at the expense of the enemy to the relief of his starving fellow-countrymen. Again and again he bars the door and sits there resolutely deaf to threat or entreaty. He tries to ignore the existence of the war even when the air is thick with the smoke of cannon. Near the hottest of the fight at Sedan a man was seen for a long time ploughing on in complete indifference to the fortunes of the day. Life, perhaps, had few attractions for him, but, while he lived, he must have the wherewithal. Indifference is all but universal—sometimes it passes into hate. Here and there an enraged woman will hurl curses at the troops as they straggle by.

The indifference, even the hate, are to be explained, if not excused, in men and women whose poverty hardly allows them the luxury of looking beyond themselves. But the supreme type of selfishness is the rich cloth merchant, M. Delaherche, for whom the battle, when once his excitement has got the better of his cowardice, is a spectacle which stimulates a violent curiosity, but leaves him otherwise unmoved. A chance encounter with the Emperor tricked out like a spectre bride, to hide the ravages of disease and despair, gives him a pleasant sense that he is, so to speak, getting his money's worth. Field glass under arm, he passes from one point of vantage to another; he picks up gossip at every corner; the use of his great courtyard as a hospital testifies to his importance. He has no sensation, indeed, but what is pleasurable till stray shells begin to fall into the town. To descend into the arena himself was his last thought, and yet he realizes now that he is already there, and risking his whole fortune. Here and there fires are breaking out in the town; the safety of his own great establishment hangs on a thread. Now he feels the criminality, the madness, of further resistance. For those who want to sell the town dearly, he feels a personal hatred, such as the enemy could never have inspired. Let the

Empire fall, so long as his manufactory but stand. Half an hour earlier, he had been the Emperor's humble servant, now he has it in him to spurn him with his foot.

All this is far from flattering to France, but M. de Vogüé professes to find even in M. Zola's presentment of the Germans an indirect but obvious slur on the behaviour of his own countrymen. If the Germans were so despicable a foe, he says, what of the conquered? The criticism would be a perfectly sound one if it were legitimately based on anything to be found in the book, but is it so? Does M. Zola by one single expression convey that the Germans are contemptible? We cannot really be seriously asked to regard Chouteau's foul-mouthed belittlings of the enemy, or the empty bombast of Rochas as having any part in the picture as a whole, or as intended to express the true character of the subject of their diatribes. M. Zola has, of course, attributed the triumphs of the German Army to system, and to discipline rather than to their reliance on the God of battles, an oversight, or an omission, which his critic will not forgive him. Historically speaking, he may be mistaken in ignoring a feature so little in dispute, but in a work which is, after all, a romance, some discretion must be allowed to the writer as to the points on which emphasis is to

be laid. He chose to discriminate, to make the German Army something impersonal, the greatest engine of destruction the world has known, and, artistically, his work would have suffered beyond expression if he had obscured the image for his reader by representing it at the same time as a kind of colossal prayer-wheel. It is, however, no less unjust to charge M. Zola with direct depreciation of his country. The condition of things on which he pours the vial of his wrath, the men whom he holds up to obloquy, are the mere accidents. If they fill a relatively large proportion of the book, it is because he will allow no one to be blind to defects the very fount and spring of which he has made it his mission to stifle and obliterate; but the Frenchman as he really is, the solid material which circumstances may disfigure, but cannot destroy, is conspicuous in every scene of the great battle. One might fill pages with the mere catalogue of noble actions; the intercourse of Maurice and Jean is studded with them, but that one graphic narrative of the unequal fight which Honoré's battery so heroically sustained, if it stood absolutely alone, would be enough to redeem its author from any suspicion of unfairness to the French soldier. This is a picture, not of the impulsive valour of the individual, but of the disciplined courage of a

body of men, of duty done with cool determination under circumstances which gave no hope of final success, hardly offered a prospect of escape from death, and the story is told, not only with wonderful vigour, but with a sympathy which is not slow to infect the reader. A fitting pendant to this picture is that of the great cavalry charge, a sublime effort of unavailing courage. The troops charged in four squadrons, waved on by the dying General Margueritte. Each squadron picking up the *débris* of the one which had gone before, and carrying it along like flotsam on the crest of a majestic wave which broke and reformed incessantly. The dead and dying heaped the ground; each time the mass came on with increasing velocity till the centre wavered under the concentrated hail of shot and shell, and drew the wings with it in a common confusion, but the charge of the fourth squadron, gathering the remnants of all that had gone before, hussars and chasseurs in an indistinguishable mass, bore them at last right up to the Prussian line. Furiously the men sabred to right and left of them, but behind the first line was a second, and a third, and a fourth; the struggling horsemen were lost among the thousands of the enemy, as though they had strayed into a wilderness of long grass. Two-thirds of the men and horses were left on the

field, and nothing was achieved: "God in heaven," cried Maurice and Jean, "there is no use in being brave." This is a piece of writing which makes the blood course more quickly. Earlier in the book there was much to sicken one, the very language of the soldiers, the hideous monotony of a vocabulary, which is reproduced with painful fidelity as though one should give the only adjective of English low life the literary prominence which is its due, the grossness of the men even in their moments of good-humour, all this gave one a feeling that this might be the cover of cruelty, but not of courage, but we are able to take leave of them now in a glow of excitement with an impression of their merits higher and more enduring than that which it effaces.

The atmosphere of a hospital is, as a matter of course, congenial to M. Zola. Count Tolstoi had torn our heart-strings by the poignancy of his descriptions, but one is rather disposed to fall back upon them for consolation after a course of hospital work with Dr. Bouroche. We might well have thought that we had penetrated to the very sanctuary of horrors, but there was an inner chamber yet, and the key was in M. Zola's hands. As we put the book down we say, "Surely this man has plucked out the very heart of war, and thrust it under our eyes!" Our capacity for

astonishment, almost for pity, is exhausted. At another time the weird picture of the troops of famished horses devouring the ground in the frenzy of a mad gallop, startling the camp in the dead of night, as they sweep through like a sudden tempest, drawing a semblance of strength from fever to exhaust it in the wild and ineffectual search for food; at another time, in any other book, the strange pathos of it would have held us spell-bound, nor does it leave us unmoved now, but our jaded appetites call a truce to a feast in which every dish is a meal in itself. Here, or hereabouts, the book should end, while the reader's attention is still at high presure, his nerves still on the stretch, but M. Zola has become enamoured of the idyll in which Jean and Henriette are concerned, and leads us through pages of superfluous matter, past the death-bed of Maurice, to a parting which might have been the beginning of a life-companionship.

One thing only remains to be added, the novelist's truly sympathetic portrait of the Emperor. It is in strict keeping with the whole spirit of the book that he should be represented throughout as vacillating and unmanned. The very haggardness of his looks helped to dispirit men who had already none too much confidence, he is in fact a type and embodiment of the physical and mental state of the army. On our first

introduction to him he is already a nonentity, and the Paris mob is his master. The imperial authority has been made over to the Empress, the supreme command of the army to Marshal Bazaine. He is without military status, but Paris insists on his keeping the field. Death awaits him at the Tuileries, the defeat of his armies is already a moral certainty. It is the same sad, helpless figure, whether we see him in the camp at Reims returning rare salutations with a wintry smile, pushing his untasted dinner from him at le Chêne, braving death at Sedan, or calling out vainly against the unceasing din of the cannon, as he paces his room in the beleaguered town. His friends have dropped away from him; his popularity has set in blackest night. It is no sudden thing. Already, when the troops are stopped in their retreat to Sedan by some unknown obstruction, a gibing voice exclaims that the Emperor's paraphernalia are blocking the way. His carriages, his servants, the elaborate mockery of a household which moves about with white-clad chefs and a whole battery of copper vessels, pouring out champagne like water, and wasting in pure wantonness what it cannot use—there is enough here to fill the starving men with something deeper than envy as they look into the brilliantly-lighted rooms. Of what use this ex-

pensive figure-head, which has even lost the merit of being ornamental? But let M. Delaherche speak what is in many bitter hearts: "A brave man indeed, that is easily said! Do you know that three shells have fallen into my factory, and it is no thanks to the Emperor if it has not been burnt to the ground. Let me tell you this tomfoolery will stand me in a hundred thousand francs. No! No! France invaded, wasted by fire and sword, business at a standstill, commerce destroyed: it is too much; we have had enough of that sort of bravery: Heaven spare us a repetition of it: he is in the mire and blood, let him stop there!"

We take our leave of him in the hotel at Bouillon on the first night of his exile, framed by the tawdry finery of an inn parlour, an empire behind him, the four walls of his prison in prospect, jeers and hisses even now reaching him from the square beneath. M. Zola may not be an Imperialist, but he has done somewhat to envelop the fall of Napoleon in a halo such as that which at once obscures and illumines the memory of Charles the First.

"ORIGINALITY IN ART."

A Letter to a Student in Architecture.

I will not weary you by saying much on the much-vexed question whether or not a new architectural style is possible. To me it seems a perfectly futile one, but there have been not a few in the past who have been unwilling that the nineteenth century should pass away without having affixed its signature definitely to some new development, or even to some new birth—always to be associated with its name thenceforward. Such an aspiration tells for me a sad story of self-importance, and is indeed no bad symbol of an age which has created advertisement as a fine art. A style started under such auspices, properly perfected in all its parts, and duly patented, should, in the eternal fitness of things, become the stock-in-trade of a limited liability company, pass through a fitful and fevered span of existence, secure, who knows, a quotation on the Stock Exchange, and be buried at last with becoming obsequies by an Official Receiver. Let the style grow if it will—but let the aspiration take care of itself. I can

conceive of no *Zeus* among architects from whose teeming and fertile brain such another Pallas Athene should spring, fully grown and completely equipped. When indeed, may we ask, in the whole history of the world has there been originality in the sense of absolutely new invention? Modification and evolution have been the watch-words all through. Those who cry out for an original style ask, as I understand them, for a tabula rasa on which to inscribe hieroglyphics never before seen, or combinations of forms without precedent. They ask for an artistic cataclysm, for a labouring of the mountains and a new and strange birth, but history will tell them that the most fundamental changes have been happened on rather than discovered—that forms have existed as results before they were recognized as the embodiment of new principles and the starting-point for fresh enterprise. All growth must be gradual; the new must germinate in the decay of the old: there is no solution of continuity in the process, no moment at which you can say that the change in degree has become one in kind, or you might argue that one moulding makes a style, as the Sophists of old that one grain makes a heap. Further than this, all experience tells us that in the sphere of art, unlike that of science, the limit of perfectibility is reached while the study is, com-

paratively speaking, still in its youth. "Those arts," it has been said,[1] "which depend on individual genius and incommunicable power have always leapt at once from infancy to manhood, from the first dawn of rude invention to their meridian height and dazzling lustre, and have in general declined after. This is the peculiar distinction and privilege of each, of science and art; of the one never to attain its utmost limit of perfection, and of the other to arrive at it almost at once. In after ages great men have arisen, one by one, as it were by throes and at intervals, but, in the earlier stages of the arts, they rose by clusters and in constellations." But I am flogging a dead horse, and am content to believe that the day for such crude imaginings has gone never to return, and that even the youngest among us realizes to-day that the mere entertainment of such an ambition stamps a man as singularly ill-fitted to make the experiment.[2] For my own part I wish we could sink styles in style and cultivate pure beauty of form and constructive propriety without troubling ourselves in any given instance what our sources of inspiration may be, or whether or not—if we care to run them to earth—

[1] W. Hazlitt.

[2] "When a man aims at originality he acknowledges himself consciously unoriginal."—Letters of J. R. Lowell.

they are all referable to one date of work. It is not everyone who can practise so bold an eclecticism, if I may use such an expression of an artist whose work can never have been consciously derivative, as Mr. John Sedding: to attempt to conjure with edge tools, as he did, is for the prentice-hand to court death by the happy despatch, but when once we have gone thoroughly and systematically through the educational mill, when the mind has been impressed for good and all with the varied outcome of centuries of artistic energy, all of which the man of broad sympathies, who can feel the common principles underlying the different forms, may well enjoy; when the artistic sense has been cultivated and the proper appreciation of beauty has become an instinct, then it is time to throw off the leading strings which, when they have ceased to guide, have begun to hamper us, and step boldly out into the field of practical architecture to do or to die.

One sees the pedantic attitude of mind to which I demur—the cultivation of the letter rather than the spirit—in the small body of amateurs who make the study of architecture their relaxation, and one sees it there perhaps at its worst. The building is too often the vile body on which to test a knowledge of styles and dates rather than the thing of beauty, and more importance is

attached to the docketing and pigeon-holing of details than to getting a large and comprehensive grasp of the whole. You will understand that I am only speaking suggestively, but I am quite clear that it is too often forgotten that the building which is a masterpiece should be approached in the same way as the book which is a classic. Dr. Johnson has told us, with a wisdom which there is no doubting, that the beauty and unity of a great conception should not be broken, or its thread interrupted by a reference to the notes on a first reading. "Notes are often necessary," he says, "but they are necessary evils. Let him that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play from the first scene to the last with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing let it not stoop to correction or explanation . . . . and when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness and read the commentators." I suppose the commentator in our case is, strictly speaking, the verger, whose mission it is to turn poetry into prose, but his mistake is shared by many in an unofficial way.

I have been speaking of the mote in my brother's eye, but it does not follow that we have not a beam

in our own; as a matter of fact, if not such sinners in our own persons, we must be held ultimately responsible for the shortcomings of others.

Let us hear what the oft-quoted Montaigne has to say on the subject. "When I hear our architects," he says, "mouth out those big and ratling words of pilasters, architraves, cornixes, frontispieces, Corinthian and Dorike works and such-like fustian terms of theirs, I cannot let my wandering imagination from a sodaine apprehension of Apollidonius his pallace, and I find by effect that they are the seely and decayed pieces of my kitchen-doore."

Montaigne was common sense personified, and gifted with that sort of perspicacity which makes his criticism valid for all time, and it is good for us to know how the hyper-professional attitude struck him, that seeming desire—if it is not a real one—to create a shibboleth, to make something of a trade secret of what is intelligible to any cultivated taste. But, to look at the same failing in another aspect, I do not know what may be the experience of others, but I have frequently been confronted in the intelligent world of art with a feeling of resentment, not more at the rigid adherence of a modern building to an old model, when there was no special suitability to suggest it,

than at its being deliberately labelled with the name and title of the type to which it conforms. For an architect to bind himself hand and foot to the rigid exercise of one style, no matter how varied the requirements he has to fulfil, if it is to cultivate dexterity at the sacrifice of the taste, judgment, and discrimination which a more liberal appreciativeness will foster, is at least a course which claims our respect; but for the same man to say, Now I am going to design in the perpendicular style, now in the Jacobean, now in that of Henri Quatre; to work professedly under several recognized sets of conditions, adhering blindly to precedent in each, and following the model with academic scrupulousness—in a word to be on terms of distant acquaintance with all, and familiar with none—does indeed seem the way to quench the spirit and leave nothing but the dry bones for our delectation: "Warnut, I says, and I ups and gives it a twiddle this way." It is nothing but the attitude of the shoddy wood-grainer writ large.

I take it that no self-respecting man is consciously satisfied with the paste and scissors method of design, however nearly he may approach it in actual practice. Even those who are least generously endowed by Nature, or most conscious of their own deficiencies, feel that they

have something within themselves, which it would be a satisfaction to them to put into their work. Originality is a wide and vague term, but at least, it conveys to most of us an idea sufficiently definite to admit of our aiming at it, and that it should be invariably made our object I do not doubt.

There seems to me absolutely nothing of real interest in a work which is simply free from solecisms and mistakes, in which all the virtues are negative, which is devoid of character and life in much the same way as the typical head which is produced by photographing one over another—where every feature is the mean between a variety of extremes. It is better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all; it is better, vulgarly speaking, to have come an artistic cropper on one's own account than to have skated about all one's life on the architectural ice leaning on the chair of convention.

I believe, then, that an independent and self-reliant attitude should be a condition precedent to all design, but I deprecate the encouragement of purely visionary aspirations for novelty. Only the other day I read, in what should have been a sober publication, as it was an official one, a warm commendation by one Frenchman of the following rhapsody by another—M. Vitet. "Never,"

says the latter, "never in the world has an art been produced twice in the same guise; or, if it has, it was a mere trade the second time, and not an art. Honour to those who even in our own day do not despair of inventing a new architecture. . . . Let them draw their inspiration neither from the forms of antiquity, nor yet from those of the middle ages, but let them be impregnated with the sentiment of a master-thought—the thought of an artist, not an archæologist."

There is a great fallacy in this aspiration to start with, and one which has been exposed before now, and that is the assumption that the intellects of a new cycle must always approach a problem from a new point of view. The real truth is that the same class of mind in any age will always approach a problem in the same way and arrive at kindred results. Signal novelties in thought, we are told, are as limited as signal inventions in architectural construction, and *vice versâ*. The Rousseau of the social contract and Émile was, to take one example, in close touch with the Spartan Lycurgus or with the society which that name represents; his nature led him to approach a problem which he believed to be identical in a way which was identical actually. Classification, in a word, should not be made according to dates, but according to the nature of

the thinkers, for that there should be a recurrence of ideas in similarly constituted thinking machines is at once natural and the fact.[1] Again, to tell one to lay violent hands on a master-thought, unless it is some one else's, is about as reasonable as to tell one to inherit 10,000*l.* a year, or to suggest that one should become Archbishop of Canterbury; master-thoughts are not so easily come by, and still less if the master-thoughts of past generations are to be a dead letter to us; we must all, too, have been archæologists in our degree, or we shall find when we sit down to the desk that the teeming visions of an exalted fancy are all too ethereal for the sober process of transmission to drawing paper.

In saying that the meaning of originality is generally understood, I am not blind to the various glosses which ignorance or self-conceit put upon it, nor in suggesting it as an aim do I mean that the young designer is to set it up consciously as a thing to be won. Originality is a subtle quality, a fresh and natural sense of fitness, which bears no forcing, which to strain after is to put

[1] Professor Huxley, in his Romanes Lecture, said: "Modern thought is making a fresh start from the base whence Indian and Greek philosophy set out, and the human mind being very much what it was six-and-twenty centuries ago, there is no wonder if it presents indications of a tendency to move along the old lines to the same results."

beyond reach: it cannot exist in the design unless it has existed first in the designer, because it is in its real nature an unconscious expression of the artist's own personality; a form of self-realization —his way of viewing a thing, his way of seeing the possibilities and meeting the necessities of a given case, and no one else's. Nature breaks the mould, as has often been said, when she forms the man: individuals may approach or touch each other at points, but never all along the line. Each is an original piece of work himself, and his natural product cannot be less so; unfortunately for us, it is very easy to go the wrong way to work, and to dam up the flow of our natural tendencies or to carry them into an artificial channel is the simplest thing in the world. This conscious craving to do something fresh, as formulated by M. Vitet, is almost fatal in itself, and the very air we breathe nowadays teaches us to be self-conscious and introspective: for better or worse, and mainly for worse, we have eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the charms of innocence and simplicity are not naturally inherent in anything we produce. Stendhal's autobiography or Marie Bashkirtscheff's diary are only extreme instances of a common complaint, and nothing opens the eyes more thoroughly to the difference between

the conditions which govern our work and those under which the masterpieces of our great predecessors were produced than the comparison of such morbid outpourings as these with the breezy simplicity of Cellini's life of himself.

If any proof were wanted of the need of an intimate conversance with old work, it would be found, I think, in the aid which it gives to facility in production, so that it is half unconscious: the tools at least are all to the craftsman's hand, and the thread of inspiration is not broken by petty interruptions. I do not like to think of limiting the scope of study in any way, but at the same time it seems clear that a man has been both better endowed by nature and will be actually better equipped whose preferences lead him to put definite bounds to the sphere of anything like exhaustive inquiry. I need not excuse myself to you if I refer you on this point to Mr. John Morley's paper on literature, because literature is one of the Fine Arts, and the same critical faculty, if not the same productive, is concerned whether architecture or English prose are in question. Mr. Morley has been speaking of the lists of the best 100 books with which we were flooded a few years ago, and he says: "To fill a man with heterogeneous scraps, from the Mahabharata and the Sheking down to Pickwick and White's Selborne,

may pass the time, but I cannot see how it would strengthen, instruct, or delight. . . . The steady working down of these lists would end in the manufacture of a prig." Now, as Mr. Morley goes on to say, "a prig has been defined as an animal which has been overfed for its size." Priggishness in design is only too real a thing, and it is always marked by exaggerated self-consciousness, but I am far from suggesting that it is inevitable, even where the designer, like a quick-change artist, appears constantly in a fresh character: it is only a shocking possibility.

I feel tempted, before leaving Mr. Morley, to make a further quotation, or series of quotations, which contain a truth quite as real for us as for the audience to whom they were addressed. "I have an unbounded faith," he says, "in the virtue of cultivating direct and precise expression. It is not everybody who can command the mighty rhythm of the greatest masters of human speech, but everyone can make reasonably sure of what he means, and whether he has found the right word.[1]

[1] From Landor's Imag. Convers.: Seneca and Epictetus:—

SENECA.—You have formed at present no idea of style.

EPICT.—I never think about it. First I consider whether what I am about to say is true; then whether I can say it with brevity, in such a manner that others shall see it as clearly as I do in the light of truth; for, if they survey it as an ingenuity, my desire is ungratified, my duty unfulfilled."

. . . It has been said a million times that the foundation of right expression in speech or writing is sincerity. . . . Right expression is a part of character. . . ." And again: "Truth is quiet; moderation and judgment are for most purposes more than the flash and glitter even of genius." I wish this were more generally recognized by the world at large for whom we have to cater. When we hear work qualified as original, should we be right in assuming that it has been conceived and carried out in the spirit which Mr. Morley inculcates, or must we not rather confess to a conviction, born of long experience, that oddity is meant rather than originality, rhodomontade rather than direct expression? Some would say that in the appreciation of the public lies the justification for such work as this. I don't know whether one would naturally go to Addison for an opinion as to the principles which should govern art, but he had a judicial way of laying down the law on general questions, and this is what he says on the point: "I shall add no more than that music, architecture, and painting, as well as poetry and oratory, are to deduce their laws and rules from the general sense of mankind, and not from the principles of those arts themselves; or, in other words, the taste is not to conform to the art, but the art to the taste." Of course it is obvious that

the fundamental principles of art were evolved by taste and have their basis in it, but not in that of the man of the street. Addison's language is not perfectly clear, but if he meant that the general direction of uncultivated likes and dislikes at any given moment is the proper criterion of what is radically good and bad, it is impossible to agree with him. Mr. Louis Stevenson, writing of the Fine Arts generally, does, indeed, say that their *raison-d'être* is to please the world at large, and that we have no business to try and make our customers buy wares they do not want, but he goes on to expatiate on the intrinsic faculty of the artist's work for conferring happiness on its creator, quite apart from any question of success. "In the wages of the life," he says, "not the wages of the trade, lies the reward;" and again, "Man's (i.e. the artist's) joy may consist with perpetual failure and find exercise in continued chase." Of the pleasure which his own work gives him he has spoken more than once: the public has the good taste to agree with him, but, had it been otherwise, I, for one, decline to believe that he would have condescended to exchange his own reading of his art for a more ample measure of popularity.

But to advise you to ignore altogether the necessity for getting your bread and cheese is to

offer a counsel of perfection. The prophet of a higher taste or purer aims no doubt runs a great risk of being left crying in the wilderness, still the heretic of to-day may be canonized to-morrow. Truth will prevail in the result, but it is a question of time. "The books," says Mr. Lecky, "which have proved of the most enduring value, have usually at first been only appreciated by a very few, and have only emerged into notoriety," as he oddly puts it, "after many years of eclipse." He continues in the following pregnant words:—"There are demagogues in literature as well as in politics; and there is a degradation of style springing from a thirst for popularity, which is at least as bad as the pedantry of scholars." It is quite true, then, that what the mature judgment of the world ultimately approves is really great; this is the ultimate test. The prophet takes a higher place than the demagogue in the long run, for in this case second thoughts are best and most permanent, and the craze of the moment rarely deserves anything better than the oblivion which is in store for it.

I cannot tell you to ignore the movement among our fellow-artists, which is to us what impressionism is among painters. I only ask you not to let your zeal for the truth betray you into magnifying the importance of those which are better

left untold. The best of motives is no excuse for some of the exaggerations which one may see to-day. But if there are some who thus fly to excess on principle, there are others whose proceedings have not that excuse, who argue, seemingly, that as isolation is possible in the midst of a crowd, so it is possible to be original in company, to be somebody else and yet yourself; but I think that those who "convey" a startling feature, or a reminiscence of one from somebody else's work, with a vague idea that on thus showing their appreciativeness they participate to some extent in the credit of a piece of design, to which none may have been due in the first instance—become, as it were, accessories after the fact—simply pile Pelion upon Ossa in the reduplication of mistakes; the step from originality misunderstood to a veiled plagiarism may not be exactly that from the sublime to the ridiculous, but the pettiness and absurdity of the latter is incontestable. Nothing is more contagious, nothing more difficult to throw off, than this diseased itching for effect, a malady which even blinds the patient to the passing of that critical moment when what he fondly believes to be new has already become stale.

Its popularity is one of the baits which such work holds out; its comparative easiness is

another. "To be intelligible," says our latter-day La Bruyère, Mr. Oscar Wilde, "is to be found out," but to be unintelligible is either to have no meaning, or to be unable to express it. It has been well said that it is easier to be odd and enigmatical than to be sensible and simple. It does not take much to collect a little gaping crowd in the street, nor is much thought nor much imaginative power requisite to provoke the attention of a people which is attracted by novelty, however crude.

It ought to be enough to ask ourselves whether eccentricity has ever been a feature of any masterpiece to avoid it like poison. In the whole sphere of Art is the finest work ever marked by that oddity which, like a joke, becomes positively wearisome directly it is familiar? Has it not rather something of the measured cadence and stately rhythm of one of Burke's periods let us say? The test of a work's merit is the degree to which it will bear living with. There is a brilliancy in decay and degradation, like the lights of a festering marshland; it leads its followers into strange and fatal paths like a will-o'-the-wisp, but the spell is soon broken. Rococo work of any kind is like the bright talker, the paradox-monger for ever on stilts, whom to meet is, after a little experience, to avoid; the quips and cranks of

such work, the pieces of wayward cleverness, like the sharp sayings of a naughty child, which amuse us in spite of ourselves, the conceits in which the designers displayed what Poe calls "the mad pride of intellectuality," are just what make it turn to ashes in the mouth.

Art is no art, as the old Latin tag tells us, unless she conceal herself to some purpose; she does not, as her semblance so often does, plume and preen her feathers for our delight: we soon weary of seeing beauty tire herself. But there is a higher perfection than successful self-effacement, and that is sublime unconsciousness of the existence of an audience.

"Suppose the Venus of Medici," said Diderot, "before you, and tell me if her nudity would offend you; but put on her feet a pair of dainty embroidered shoes, fasten to her knee with a rose-coloured garter a clinging white stocking, and the whole difference between the decent and the indecent will be apparent to you at once. It is the difference between the woman whose charms one sees, and the one who displays them."

The highest Art, to my mind, is neither that which courts display, nor that which wears a veil, but that which, like another Eve before the fall, knows no need of one, whose beauty is there without reserve, patent to all men if they have eyes

to see, and so perfect in the harmony of all its parts that to know it familiarly is to light upon a fresh charm every day.

There is an old German story, of course familiar to you, of a certain charlatan who professed the highest skill in fresco-painting, and his art had this peculiar feature, which of course enhanced its monetary value, that it was invisible except to the eye of wisdom. Commissioned by some Royal Highness to decorate the walls of a saloon, the pseudo-painter went on interminably pawing the air with his brush: of course neither king nor courtier could see what did not exist, but they were not the less lavish with their praise, and if a suspicion ever entered the mind of any one of them, he had not the strength of mind to speak out, and run the risk of labelling himself uncultivated. The point of the fable is obvious enough, if not to our present purpose, but I think we may take the thief's qualification of his work as a scathing sarcasm on public taste, and the behaviour of the king and his court as an equally bitter commentary on the power of fashion, and the hollowness of such apparent appreciation. The highest art, after all, appeals to a comparatively small circle. Its beauties are as invisible to the uneducated eye as the frescoes in the fable. Its very harmoniousness and unity give it a

reticence unappreciable to those whose eyes are focussed for the brilliant and the garish; but, as I have already said, it is only a matter of time. No really great work has ever lacked recognition in the end, and if a man is to reach his highest level of production, it must be by working in accordance with the promptings of his conscience, and not by grasping at the shadow of popularity.

I pass on now to those, and they are not a few, who, in an exaggerated reliance on their own fertility of invention, are not content with simply being unlike other people, but spend their lives in the effort to be unlike themselves, who discard what circumstances suggest, or even what convenience dictates, merely because the solution bears a near resemblance to one already arrived at, of whose style you can predicate nothing with certainty, so successfully do they mask their predilections, so sedulously do they cultivate variety. Such instability, combined as it frequently is with great talent, seems to me perfectly inexcusable, not less so than a corresponding degree of moral irresponsibility would be. Just as you can assert with confidence the action of a friend, whose character is known to you, under given circumstances, so you ought to be able to recognize the artistic touch—the individnal impress—of one with whose work you are familiar.

Cornelius O'Dowd said years ago that no man of really commanding intellect or strong character was ever to be looked for among those adepts at foreign languages who make them their own in so real a sense, that their ideas, their way of looking at things, become those of the people whose language they are speaking—for that is what intimate conversance with a language means; such a power of adaptability shows consummate cleverness, but is something quite different from genius, both intellectually and morally. "Capacity[1] rather relates to the quantity of knowledge; genius to its quality. Capacity is power over given ideas or combinations of ideas; genius is the power over those which are not given," and as with language, the power of absorbing various different styles, of straying without predilection over the whole field of design, and grasping all the little distinctive tricks and turns, which answer to the idioms of a language, is not a thing to aspire to, nor is it the mark of greatness in its possessor. Genius cannot be commanded, of course: in its intellectual aspect it offers a bare precipice of rock the top of which no one can reach except on the wings of a divine imagination, but in so far as it is a moral quality we may and ought at least to gain its outworks.

If a man has any moral backbone, what he is

[1] Hazlitt.

once, he is always: this is not the negation of freewill, since you cannot predicate either free will or necessity of a non-moral, irresponsible being, nor is the recognition of a man's hall-mark on his work any sign of limitation in his powers: rather it denotes that he has a definite character and settled convictions—in other words, a style of his own: failing this impress, his work may be original in a certain sense, but to the higher quality of individuality it can have no possible claim.

It is said that a judge must be told twice what you want him to understand, a special jury three times, a common jury six times, and I think, generally speaking, our attention bears directing with some persistency to what is good and worthy of being remembered, to some form in which its creator finds his most complete expression. It is satisfying to see the growth of the idea in the designer's brain, the process of evolution: this is how Nature works, step by step, rung by rung up the ladder of perfection, and Art in its natural state—as it grows, not as it is manufactured—is in strict analogy with Nature's processes. The history of our own Art can be read in wood and stone, the embellishment of the traditional, the birth of a new inspiration from the ashes of an old one. But turn for a minute to contemporary

work, to one of the most interesting and distinctive careers of our day, that of the late Mr. H. H. Richardson, of Boston. There was a man who once satisfied that he had struck a happy vein, a fitting medium for self-realization—and he was, like all artistic natures, sensitive and hard to satisfy—was not afraid of working it out, of filling afresh to-day from yesterday's well of inspiration, of playing new variations on an air which was already in the hands of his public, and yet I think I shall be only expressing the general opinion of our profession when I say that it would be difficult to find anything more instructive for the tyro in design, more delightful indeed for anyone, than the series of libraries and railway stations, so obviously fathered by one man and yet so distinct from one another, for which he was responsible. Mere originality, as such, is simply swallowed up in the strong individuality of a man who, like a true artist, spent himself in the pursuit of perfection.

Production is always a pleasure, but the more complete self-expression the higher and purer it is, though some never allow themselves the opportunity of making the discovery. Such a mode of work as Richardson's, turning neither to right nor left, but advancing steadily along the road which his taste marked out for him, is not only the most

moral in itself, but it is that which promotes most highly the welfare of Art at large.

If a man arranges his wares like a tradesman to suit the taste of the moment, or if he is perversely determined to fly in the face of his own special talent, if he is for ever turning down by-ways in the mere restless craving for variety, or the desire to impress his public with a versatility which they do not suspect, he will be selfishly sacrificing his Art to himself, and will have no one but himself to blame if his vogue quickly passes. To do a popular piece of work rather than a good one is to offer up the future on the altar of the present, to eat up your capital instead of living on the interest. You will make a greater show at the moment, but you will not cut up so well in the event.

The game of Art is like the game of cricket: the cricketer may keep his own average or his analysis in his mind's eye, of course, but primarily he has to play for his side, and may be called upon to make a sacrifice. Unselfishness in both cases is little less to be cultivated than actual skill, and the true artist will be ready to sink himself in the spirit which is the mark of true sportsmanship.

If, then, I am not disposed to deduct one jot from my esteem of a man who turns again with fresh zest to his own imaginings, I am no more inclined to quarrel with those in whom lies the power—the

sign and seal this of greatness—to make everything their own on which their hand falls. I say boldly that the great artist cannot plagiarize from his insignificant brother, however largely he may draw on him for material. The medium of expression is a matter of comparatively small importance, but it is quite as possible to be original in the treatment of an old theme as in striking out a new one. D'Artagnan existed in real life before Dumas made a demi-god of him; Handel laid violent hands on a thirteenth-century French air, and transformed it into the "Harmonious Blacksmith." Yet who would be so absurd as to give two thoughts to its origin? There may be some who in the spirit of Carlyle's Dryasdust follow up the mighty river of Shakespeare's creations to a fountain head in Plutarch, or tax Burns with having founded his "Cotter's Saturday Night" on Ferguson, or his Epistles on Ramsay, but to what purpose are such criticisms unless it is to show to what pettinesses the critic's craft at times obliges him to descend? So far as regards the subject of their animadversions they may be summarily put aside. To put the warm breath of life into Pygmalion's cold marble, that is what genius does to the subject-matter which it usurps. How little the strong man feels the indignity of borrowing may be instanced by Richardson's proceedings in the case

of his design for Trinity Church, Boston. Mrs. Van Rensselaer, in her interesting account of him, tells us how he cast about, for some time in vain, for a motive for the central tower of the church, till he happened to come across a photograph of the lantern of the old Cathedral of Salamanca. He saw his opportunity at once, and, bold as he was in presuming to treat so fine a conception as his raw material, he justifies his action by the result. His own impress is nowhere more perceptible than it is in that tower, and yet it is still Salamanca, just as Salamanca is at once itself and Vendôme.

The author of "The Bible in Spain" has given us in his delightful book "Lavengro" a view of the other side of the question, in his representation of the author whose mania for what he understands as originality leads him to distrust the very breezes for fear they should whisper something which the inspiration has already suggested, and so make it valueless. He cribs, cabins, and confines himself in the attempt to say nothing which has ever been hinted at before. His imagination chafes at the bit, but he curbs it in remorselessly, and if he did not succeed in turning a mettled courser into a common hack, it was because the scales fell from his eyes before it was too late. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the

foolish purism which has its foundation in selfishness, and is as little to be admired as are the arts of the plagiarist.

But the master mind will turn men to its own purpose as readily as their ideas. Every one knows, though no one can quite understand the manner of it, that the elder Dumas was the presiding genius—in every sense of that word—of a colossal literary manufactory, the Vulcan in an intellectual smithy, from which a stupendous amount of work, good, bad, and indifferent, was turned out, in which much was very good, little was wholly bad, and all was individual. He had his detractors, of course, gentlemen whose superior sharpness enabled them to credit the various ghosts with most of the merit of the work, but such a contention was absurd on the face of it: the books which I hope you have found time to read are the work of one man, whoever he was, and the mediocrity of even the best of his workmen—such as M. Maquet—when left to their own devices shows that that man was Dumas. It is an old, old story, a serial that will run till the crack of Doom. Perugino's saintly Madonnas and adoring attendants, in which the personal equation seems to go for so much, were turned out by the gross, as Professor Symonds has told us, but, to revert once

again to Richardson, whose manner of work is, after all, more immediately interesting to you as an architect, nothing could illustrate more completely what I have said than his practice. I do not stop to discuss whether his attitude towards those he employed was generally better for their artistic training than the more usual one, or not, but so suggestive was he, so subtly did he work on his assistants by hint and criticism, rather than by direct illustration of his meaning or his wishes, that they appear themselves hardly to be able to tell us how they were made to carry out his ideas; yet he was in his way as individual as Dumas, and his death has displayed little less cruelly than that of the great novelist, how paramount that influence was which was kept so consistently in the background, how veritably the divine spark which illumined his work was in him and in no one else.

I shall seem to doubt your good sense if I sound a note of warning. It is obvious enough that so masterful an appropriation of other people's goods is not for all; indeed it is for very few. Most of us are fitted by nature to play the part of the tool in the master-hand rather than that of the master-hand itself, and if we meddle with other men's work in the ambition of absorbing it and making it our own, we shall probably find that it

is too strong for us, and that, instead of the dog wagging the tail, the tail is wagging the dog.

I hope you will have gathered, and, indeed, it hardly needs the telling, that originality in the highest sense of the word, or individuality—for the two are practically synonymous—is not a thing which can be commanded. But the humblest of us have something to express, which may be of interest without shaking the foundations of the world, and if we have not the power or the will to approach our work freshly, to rely frankly on our own inspiration or the results of our own thought, then architecture was not meant for us, nor we for architecture. Mere book-work, mere accurate reproduction and formal arrangement of traditional forms, is hardly worthy of the name of architecture; it is a mechanical process, devoid of all vitality, and can give no real pleasure to the producer any more than to the consumer. But, taking it for granted that your natural endowments are not so limited as this, I ask you to try to approach your problem as if it had never been solved before. Do not think of precedent for the moment, either to adhere to it slavishly, which is folly, or to outrage it, which is insanity, but consider the special circumstances in which you are placed, without reflecting that they are usual enough, the requirements which you are

bound to fulfil, and the effects you are going to produce, in pure unshackled self-reliance. Your training will stop you short of the commission of an absurdity, your intelligence will tell you when the general consensus of opinion has laid down certain laws either for the provision of comfort, or for the satisfaction of taste, which are, so to speak, immutable and must be abided by, but it will tell you, in the same breath, that tradition is not everything, that the brain of humanity is busy devising fresh tools for your hand every day, that there is such a thing as running in a groove from a simple unquestioning acceptance of things as they are, when the circumstances which dictated the particular course may have long changed. It reminds me of the story of the sentry whose charge was a grass plot in the neighbourhood of the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg; one day the Emperor, who had seen a sentry on duty there a thousand times without giving it a second thought, happened to ask what particular duty the man was fulfilling, or why he was there. No one knew, till the oldest inhabitant or even perhaps some musty record, revealed the fact, that a reign or two previous a soldier had been placed there one day to prevent a crocus from being picked. We must assume that the crocus had died in

the interval, but still officialism clung heroically to tradition, and that is exactly what the less originative minds among us are in danger of doing. Think everything out and accept nothing without question. Originality, believe me, is not necessarily spontaneous in character; it lies just as much in thinking out as in rapid conception, in labour as in impulse, and it must belong to the essential form of your work, be really part and parcel of it, not be thrown over it at the last moment like drapery over a lay figure.

If the question is put, Why have you done so and so? a sound reason should always be forthcoming. This is a somewhat severe test, but a genuine one, and is more likely to be passed successfully if your originality starts with the first thought you give your subject, co-exists with its first formulation, and consists not so much in the treatment of a feature as in its presence. I say, think everything out for yourself. To ignore tradition is like sitting down to write on a well-known subject without having made yourself master of the literature which bears on it, but if our education to-day bears fruit, the young designer will carry much of the lore of his subject in his brain in a more portable and infinitely more useful form than that of books, because it has passed out of the sphere of the mechanical

into that of the instinctive. Perhaps it will illustrate the value of looking at things with a fresh eye if I make a short quotation from some remarks made by Mr. W. B. Richmond before the Art-workers' guild a year or two ago:—

"Why do you architects," he said, "in all, or most, instances make the windows of every sitting-room in a London street to come down to the ground, or nearly so? I have often looked up at that dark strip of wall above the three windows of a London drawing-room, and on the wall between the windows, where, usually, a looking-glass is placed because nothing else would be visible; and I have wondered why some one does not make one long window the whole width of the room, right up to the cornice, and about five feet from the ground divided by three brick piers, on which might be placed, on the inside, beaten metal work after the design of a pilaster: the same treatment might be adopted for a dining-room, and would be especially valuable in a library," and so forth.

I suppose Mr. Richmond hardly intends to make architects responsible for an ordinary London house, and I do not mention the particular suggestion as being quite novel, but it serves to indicate the frame of mind in which the most time-honoured situation, treated a thousand

times in the same way, should still be approached on the thousand and first occasion.

The late Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, once said in his quietly sarcastic way, "We are all liable to be mistaken at times, even the youngest of us." To be cocksure is, indeed, the happy privilege of youth, as are enthusiasm and many other pleasant qualities in which chill old age would be only too glad to participate, but I ask you to remember that even amongst the most highly gifted, or perhaps I should say, especially among the highly gifted, during the period in which the artistic character is being formed, self-reliance should be tempered with self-restraint; eccentricities may be perpetrated under a sudden impulse, which please their author at the time because they express his mood, but when one is older and wiser, or at least more circumspect, it is pleasanter not to have the indiscretions of an ill-disciplined youth standing there in all the durability of brick and stone to point an untiring finger of derision at one.

THE END.